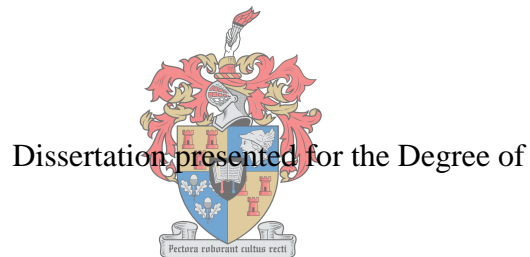


**A phenomenological investigation into the lived  
experience of selected Accounting teachers in the Western  
Cape Province**

**Karen Joy Koopman**

Magister Educationis



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Faculty of Education

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Supervisor: Prof L. Le Grange

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the lived experiences of selected Further Education and Training Accounting teachers residing in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. The main research question is: What are the lived experiences of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape province? The subsidiary research questions are: (i) How do Accounting teachers experience the circumstances (contexts) in which they teach? (ii) How did the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decade impact on their disposition towards the curriculum? (iii) How do the Accounting teachers' convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which they experience their work? (iv) What motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do?

To answer the main research questions and sub-questions accurately, I purposively selected five research participants. Three of the five participants teach at historically disadvantaged schools with a quintile index rating ranging from 1 to 2, while the other two participants teach at historically advantaged schools with the quintile index rating ranging from 4 to 5. To elicit rich descriptions of the teachers' subjective experiences, this study conducted in-depth semi-structured phenomenological interviews augmented with field notes for the data construction process. Each interview was divided into two parts. The first part of each interview captured the childhood and early adulthood experiences of the research participants. Their childhood and early adulthood experiences included where they grew up, the influential roles of their parents, their Accounting teachers and their Accounting lecturers at the institutions of higher learning where they acquired their teacher's training. The second part of each interview focused mainly on their practices as in-service Accounting teachers.

The research participants' experiences as in-service Accounting teachers were captured from four perspectives. First, their challenges, fears and convictions as Accounting teachers were captured as well as the way they cope with the conditions within which they teach. Secondly, their teaching strategies were noted. Thirdly, their experiences of the changing landscape in education in South Africa over the last two decades were recorded. Finally, their drive to remain in

the teaching profession despite the daily challenges they are confronted with was documented.

Theoretically I drew on Edmund Husserl's 'life world' theory, Martin Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body' theory. These theories formed the essence of the conceptual and data explication frameworks. Husserl's 'lifeworld theory' was used to craft a descriptive narrative for each research participant, which laid the foundation for the interpretive narrative based on Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*. The descriptive and interpretive narratives guided the construction of the anticipatory interpretive narrative that was based on the 'lived body theory' of Merleau-Ponty.

The findings revealed that there is a significant match between each research participant's childhood experiences and teacher training with their professional trajectories as Accounting teachers. This means that their perception of Accounting as a school subject was constructed and shaped by their experiences as learners and as pre-service teachers.

Despite all the frustrations and concerns around the subject Accounting, the research participants all agree that they want to remain in the teaching profession. These findings have implications for policy-makers, curriculum designers, teacher educators and phenomenological researchers.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek die geleefde ervarings van geselekteerde Rekeningkunde-onderwysers in die Verdere Onderrig en Opvoeding fase in die Wes-Kaap provinsie, Suid-Afrika. Die sentrale navorsingsvraag wat hierdie studie is: Wat is die geleefde ervarings van geselekteerde Rekeningkunde-onderwysers in die Wes-Kaap? Die onderliggende vrae wat verder uit die sentrale navorsingsvraag vloei is: (i) Hoe ervaar Rekeningkunde-onderwysers die omstandighede (konteks) waarin hulle werk? (ii) Hoe het die verskillende veranderinge in die kurrikulum oor die laaste twee dekades hulle gesindheid teenoor die vak beïnvloed? (iii) Hoe beïnvloed die Rekeningkunde-onderwysers se oortuigings omtrent hulself die manier waarop hulle hul werk ervaar? (iv) Wat motiveer Rekeningkunde-onderwysers om te doen wat hulle doen?

Om die sentrale navorsingsvraag en onderliggende vrae akkuraat te beantwoord, het hierdie studie doelbewus vyf deelnemers geselekteer om aan die studie deel te neem. Drie van die vyf onderrig tans in histories benadeelde skole, terwyl die ander twee in histories bevoordeelde skole onderrig. Die kwantiel indeks gradering van die histories benadeelde skole lê tussen 1 en 2, terwyl dit van die bevoordeelde skole tussen 4 en 5 is. Om omvattende beskrywings van die onderwysers se ervarings vas te vang rondom hoe die Rekeningkunde-opvoeders onderrig en leer ervaar, het hierdie studie in-diepte semi-gestruktureerde fenomenologiese onderhoude met hulle gevoer. Om meer diepte aan hulle beskrywings in die onderhoude te gee het hierdie studie ook veldnotas gebruik. Die doel van die onderhoud skedule was tweevoudig. Die eerste doel was om hulle ervarings as kinders en tienerjare vas te vang. Hier was die fokus op die invloedryke rolle wat hul ouers in hul ontwikkeling en groei gespeel het, en hoe hulle Rekeningkunde-onderwysers en dosente hulle vroeë ervarings met die vak intellektueel gevorm het. Die tweede deel van die onderhoud het slegs op hul praktyke gefokus. In hierdie deel was die invalshoek, eerstens, op hul uitdagings, vrese asook oortuigings en hoe hulle dit baasraak. Tweedens, hulle onderrig strategieë. Derdens, hoe hulle die kurrikulêre veranderinge die afgelope dekade hanteer en laastens, wat dryf hulle om in die beroep te bly.

Hierdie studie was gerig deur die werke van Edmund Husserl se ‘lifeworld’ teorie, Martin Heidegger se nosie van ‘*Dasein*’ en Maurice Merleau-Ponty se ‘lived body’ teorie. Hierdie teorieë het ook die basis van die konseptuele en analitiese raamwerk gevorm. Husserl se ‘lifeworld’ teorie was gebruik om die beskrywende narratief van elke onderwyser te vorm en het ook die grondslag gelê om die interpretatiewe narratief te vorm gebaseer op Heidegger se nosie van *Dasein*. Beide die beskrywende narratief en die interpretatiewe narratief was as basis gebruik om die antisympatiese interpretatiewe narratief te skryf gebaseer op Merleau-Ponty se ‘lived body’ teorie.

Uit hierdie studie blyk dit dat daar ‘n direkte verband is tussen elke deelnemer se ervaringe as kinders en opleiding as prospektiewe onderwyser en hoe hulle hul uitleef as professionele Rekeningkunde-onderwysers. Dit beteken dat hulle persepsie van Rekeningkunde alreeds in hulle vroeë jare as leerders en studente geslyp was.

Ten spyte van al hulle frustrasies en besorgdheid rondom Rekeningkunde, dui elke deelnemer aan dat hulle in die beroep wil bly. Hierdie bevindinge het transformerende gevolge vir beleidskeppers, kurrikulêre ontwerpers, dosente verantwoordelik vir onderwys opleiding asook vir navorsers in fenomenologie.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*All glory to the Lord God my Saviour for opening doors in my life – for going before me and clearing the forest – for helping me live my passion in fulfilling my destiny.*

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late parents, Edward and Sheila de Mink, who encouraged and supported me throughout their lives and always emphasised the importance of education.

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A note to Phoebe, Taffi, Lisa, Andrew, and Carmen: You are part of my inspiration for undertaking this project. *Never give up on your dreams.*

*This project has made me look at people with a greater sense of empathy – it has helped me see the “sky in its entirety” (Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 2).*



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE:	Advanced Certificate in Education
ACE: CAT:	Advance Certificate of Education in Computers Application Technology
BComm:	Bachelor of Commerce
BEd:	Bachelor of Education
BEd (Hons):	Bachelor of Education: Honours
BTech: Comm:	Bachelor of Technology: Commerce
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
CBD:	Central Business District
CNE:	Christian National Education
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
EMS:	Economic and Management Sciences
FAK:	Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge
FDE: Comm:	Further Diploma in Education: Commerce
FET:	Further Education and Training
FP:	Fundamental Pedagogics
GET:	General Education and Training
HDE:	Higher Diploma in Education
HDE: Comm:	Higher Diploma in Education: Commerce
HOD:	Head of Department
ICNO:	Instituut vir Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys

MEd:	Master's in Education
NATED:	National Assembly of Training and Education
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
NQ:	National Quintile
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
NSC:	National Senior Certificate
NUM:	Natural Units of Meaning
PGCE:	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study and
RNCS:	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACMEQ:	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SMT:	School Management Team
TD: Comm:	Teacher's Diploma: Commerce
TIMMS:	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies
UM:	Units of Meaning
WCED:	Western Cape Education Department

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## ***CHAPTER ONE***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Research, like almost everything else in life, has autobiographical roots (Seidman, 1991, p. 24).

#### **1.1 Origin of this study**

An important part of the research project is examining where a particular research question comes from in one's own life – why it seems important to the teacher-researcher. In many cases this is a matter of investigating one's own socialization – a kind of self-reflection that becomes part of the investigation (Ballenger, 1992, p. 201).

In the light of Ballenger's (1992) and Seidman's (1991) statements, I acknowledge that this research stems directly from my personal experience. In this chapter I will firstly orient the reader to my introduction to and involvement with Accounting, as well as my experience in the teaching profession, more specifically as a teacher educator involved with evaluating pre-service and in-service Accounting teachers. Next, I will describe the research problem, the research questions, the purpose of the study, its significance and scope. A short literature review follows, which includes a very brief explanation of phenomenology and its origin. In the second half of this chapter I describe the research design and methodology and the trustworthiness of the data. Finally, this chapter concludes by reporting on the ethical considerations and by presenting an outline of each chapter.

#### **1.2 My childhood experiences and early orientation towards Accounting**

According to Adler (1937), it is important to understand a person's childhood experiences because they provide an insight into a person's outlook on life. Marcus (1992) notes that their childhood holds a lot of meaning and significance for people and he draws attention mostly to a person's connectedness with his or her parents. From this perspective Macmurray (2012) alludes to the powerful influence our parents have on our thinking and perceptions during our infant and childhood phases. He avers that people first live as 'individuals' rather than as

‘persons’. To Macmurray (2012) the term ‘individual’ signifies the *over-reliance* or *dependence* [of a child] on others as he or she develops. ‘Person’, on the other hand, gives expression to a child’s capacity to live in interdependent relations with others. This means the capacity to focus on what is other than themselves and in particular other persons. I was born and raised in a little town in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa. Indeed, drawing on Macmurray (2012), I now realise how dependent and over-reliant I was on both my mother and father for my learning. This was because my father – an industrious and disciplined man – was a high school teacher (and later a lecturer) and my mother – a quiet, stylish, stately lady – a sales assistant (and later matron of a hostel for students). As a child I did not grow up with modern technology – as a matter-of-fact television because available in South Africa only when I was 10 years old. This lack of external influences, such as television, the internet and other technological sources, increased my ‘individualism’ as my dependence on my parents became more overwhelming to understand the world around me. Back then the TV schedule started at 18:00, so my brothers and I had to keep ourselves occupied until that time by playing imaginative games. My father discursively shaped my interest in teaching when he bought me a chalkboard, duster and chalk. My brothers and I played ‘school-school’ and I was always the teacher. Years later, when I asked my father why he bought the chalkboard, he replied: “We had to find a way to keep you busy, because you were hyperactive”. Did God place that idea in my parents’ hearts? All I remember is that I enjoyed playing *the teacher*, whose image assumes a prominent or a conspicuous quality in my childhood memory. In Adler’s (1937) terms, the fact that I always wanted to be the teacher not only accentuates my desire for power and importance but also reveals valuable hints about my future goals and values. My mother in turn instilled my first love for Accounting when I was still very young as she told stories about how her father – who owned a green grocer – would teach her about saving and doing the books of a business.

Through my parents’ ‘personal lives’ and their perceptions of the world, I learned to see the world outside of me during this phase of my life. Contemplative experiences are important because one learns to make emotional bonds with



things that one's parents consider to be important. From this perspective Macmurray writes: "contemplation when it is genuine centers our attention and interest upon something outside of us, and so is a powerful counteraction to the egocentricity which keeps us juvenile and adolescent" (2012, p. 672). The fact that my father unconsciously introduced me to teaching and my mother to Accounting meant that these disciplines crystallized in my sub-conscious mind and I unknowingly developed an awareness and emotional connectedness to them. Indeed, looking back, I think I developed an appreciation for the value of teaching and Accounting.

Years later, in high school, my Grades 8 and 9 Accounting teacher almost ferociously destroyed the childhood passion I had developed for Accounting. Instead of teaching us to think critically about what we were doing (to analyse), he simply told us to memorise how to enter transactions. This instrumental and associational approach to teaching made me see Accounting as a very boring or unimaginative and dogmatic subject. His approach to teaching reflected the bureaucratisation of the apartheid state, whose educational objectives for blacks (in this case the learners) had very little intellectual value. For my entire school career (Grades 1 to 12) the all-pervasive, dominant authoritarian ideology underpinning education under apartheid was Christian National Education (CNE), which I will discuss next, together with the doctrine of Fundamental Pedagogics (FP).

This narrative would be incomplete without detailing the context in which I received my schooling. From this perspective I want to pay careful attention to the historical voices and memories that had been repressed in my consciousness. Hall (1989, p. 19-20) writes:

The past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say ... Our relationship to the past is quite a complex one, we can't pluck it up out of where it was and simply restore it to ourselves.

Although the rhetoric of CNE and the perverse doctrine of FP did not make sense while I was in school, their effects were deeply rooted in my sub-conscious mind.

It was only when I went to university to study teaching that I could make sense of the past and follow the debates around CNE and FP policies formulated under apartheid. Today I realise CNE and FP lie at the root of the past and current complex problems that drive our education and schooling. South Africa's educational failures and poor learner performance in the current annual National Senior Certificate examinations and other systemic evaluations and international benchmark tests, such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) are symptoms of much deeper problems, so one should not simply blame teachers for the poor results. For almost five decades learners (some of whom became teachers) had to endure rote learning and memorization as the main form of teacher pedagogy. I can still remember in Grades 8 and 9 how I had to memorise my Accounting notes (definitions), which did not make much sense to me back then. There was little consideration given to the practical application of the principles of accounting and the accounting equation. The failure of the teachers at my school to stimulate the learners resulted in the majority of them disengaging from the subject, as only about fifty learners out of the entire school population (English and Afrikaans classes combined) decided to continue with the subject in Grades 10 to 12 (Standards 8 to 10 back then). In deconstructing my experience as an Accounting learner I will examine the discourse of CNE and FP and their subsequent impact on my development as an Accounting learner.

According to Eshak (1987), CNE has its roots in a form of South African Calvinism which underpinned the apartheid government's racial policies. This is because both Calvinism and CNE implied close ties between the church and the state, and consequently all schooling in South Africa under apartheid could be regarded as a form of 'church' schooling. The architects of CNE were Afrikaners who belonged to two very influential committees, namely, 'Die Instituut vir Christelike-Nasionale Onderwys' (ICNO) and 'Die Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge' (FAK) (Eshak, 1987). In 1948, after the ICNO published the Christelike Nasionale Onderwysbeleid, the national party adopted the resolution that CNE must conform to FAK's version of CNE. Article 14 of this policy states

that “the coloured can be made race conscious if the principle of race segregation is strictly applied”, whilst article 15 emphasises “the principle of trusteeship, not equality and segregation”. Indeed, the main idea underpinning CNE was to propagate Christian values that intended to Christianise the “Coloured”<sup>1</sup> and the “Bantu” (see Education Policy Act, Act 39 of 1967). The FAK, which formulated the policy of CNE, was a front for the Broederbond,<sup>2</sup> and affiliated to it were church organisations and women’s associations, among others. Every Prime Minister after 1948 was a member of this organisation.

While CNE formed the theory of education under apartheid, FP was a method that guided the authoritarian pedagogical practices of all teachers in South Africa (Le Grange, 2008). To explain this Enslin (1990, p. 87) writes:

Central to the content of the educational doctrine endorsed by Fundamental Pedagogics, as distinct from but complementing its methodology, is the claim that education is, universally, the leading of the helpless dependent child to adulthood by the adult pedagogue. Out of this claim emerges the justification for authoritarian practices.

Enslin (1984, 1990) points out that South African education was separated into schools, classified according to race, within the Republic of South Africa and the so-called self-governing territories of Venda, Ciskei, Transkei and Bophuthatswana (all of which were later reincorporated into the ‘new South Africa’). Within the boundaries of the Republic of South Africa, the education system was administered through four main departments: the House of Assembly (DET-A) for those classified as White, the House of Delegates (DET-D) for Indian people, the House of Representatives (DET-R) for Coloured people, and the Department of Education and Training (DET) for Blacks. In addition, some provinces were further sub-divided into different departments for different race groups in the province.

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<sup>1</sup> Coloured: The apartheid government in South Africa categorised people into various races, namely White, Coloured, Indian and Black.

<sup>2</sup> Broederbond: The Afrikaner Broederbond (meaning Afrikaner Brotherhood/Broederbond was a secret, exclusively male and Afrikaner Calvinist organisation in South Africa dedicated to the advancement of Afrikaner interest (Levy, 2011).

In the FP tradition the teacher viewed the learner as unfinished or incomplete. The teacher perceived the episteme of the learner as “completely clumsy, unskilled, ignorant, injudicious, inexperienced, incompetent, undisciplined, irresponsible and therefore very dependent” (Eshak, 1987, p. 4). This perception of the learners guided the teaching style of my Grades 8 and 9 Accounting teacher. Another aspect of the racialised education agenda of the apartheid government was not to offer Accounting in DET schools. This resulted in the exclusion of many Blacks from the financial sector. This was used as an effective strategy to protect the survival, superiority and economic well-being of the minority White population. Furthermore, most of the teachers trained under apartheid were inadequately prepared, as their training focused only on the transmission of facts and discounted the significance of values and practical implications of the subject.

Fortunately, in Grades 10 to 12 we had a different Accounting teacher who had also been trained in the FP tradition, but introduced a completely new way of teaching compared to that of my Grade 8 and 9 teacher. She taught us the principles of accounting (the *why* behind every entry) and that everything revolves around one equation, namely, the accounting equation – a strategy that I also followed in my own Accounting classes in my later life as a teacher. This teacher played an instrumental role in rekindling my love of Accounting. Her approach was more ‘person-centred’ as opposed to the traditional authoritarian approach that viewed us learners as empty vessels waiting to be filled. In a sense she freed me from the traditional, narrow-minded and unimaginative or boring approach of my Grade 8 and 9 teacher. Although the Accounting curriculum we followed (that is, the NATED Report 550<sup>3</sup>) paid very little attention to the real-life

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<sup>3</sup> NATED Report 550: The National Assembly of Training and Education – this curriculum was implemented during the apartheid era. During apartheid South Africa had 18 different education departments. These departments were classified according to race. (Refer to Chapter Two for a more detailed description of the history of the South African curriculum.) Each department’s students wrote a different final examination at the end of Grade 12 (back then it was referred to as Standard 10). Based on the (apartheid) NATED Report 550, Grade 12 learners were issued with a Senior Certificate. After the abolition of apartheid the Senior Certificate was replaced by the National Senior Certificate. Since then all races are being issued with the National Senior Certificate (Grussendorff, 2010).

experiences and practices of Accounting, she always attempted to make us see the link between theory and practice.

At the beginning of 1988, upon my father's advice, I registered at the Peninsula Technikon<sup>4</sup> for a teaching qualification – Higher Diploma in Education: Commerce (HDE: Comm). This was a teaching qualification that specialised in commerce subjects. I majored in Accounting, Business Economics, Economics and Typing. After completing my teaching qualification, I taught Accounting, Business Economics and Economics at a high school. Most learners who chose Accounting in Grades 10 to 12 experienced the same challenges, that is, relying on memory and rote learning. I tried to change the perception that Accounting is a boring or dull subject by following a humanist approach to the teaching and learning of Accounting. According to Rogers and Freiberg (1994), a humanist approach is based on the belief that within each person there is an inborn capacity to learn and a curiosity that is combined with self-actualisation. The aim of this strategy was to encourage self-development and to provoke interest in my learners, whilst at the same time moving away from the idea of teaching to the test or the examination. My approach stood in strong contrast to the behaviourist philosophy of CNE and FP to which I was subjected as a learner. Through this approach I could see my learners grow and develop. This approach stemmed from my own convictions and from the experiences that I had with the subject as a learner of Accounting.

In 1998, six months before completing my Bachelor of Technology in Commerce (BTech: Comm) I left the high school and took up a new position at a Further Education and Training (FET) college, where I taught Entrepreneurship (and other business-related subjects). I also wrote learning material for and worked on various business courses on (the then new) occupationally specific programmes (that is, Learnerships and Skills programmes). In the materials I developed I wanted to move away from the traditional approach of theory and wanted to make it practical and applicable to the experiences of the students. I wanted to draw on

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<sup>4</sup> Peninsula Technikon: By 1979 the apartheid government drew a distinction between universities and a new group of institutions they called technikons.

their strengths and potentialities to guide me in drafting the content. This was because I was fully aware of the merits of following a learner-centred approach.

In 2006, whilst reading towards my Master's degree in Education (MEd), I started to lecture at a university of technology – in the Business Faculty and Education Faculty. The modules I lectured in the Business Faculty were not related to Accounting. In the Education Faculty I lectured on Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship: Subject Didactics (now referred to as Entrepreneurship: Curriculum Studies) in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) programme to students who wanted to teach Business Studies at school; in the Bachelor of Education Honours (BEd: Hons) programme I lectured on the above-mentioned modules plus Education Management. During this time I also compiled a workbook for my BEd students on basic Accounting, because many of my students lacked a firm foundation in Accounting, although they did the subject at high school. In between lecturing full-time I also worked on the Advanced Certificate for Education (ACE): Accounting course for employed teachers. This work sowed the initial seeds for pursuing empirical work on teachers' experiences with the teaching of Accounting. This was because (i) most of the teachers I trained revealed their concerns about and challenges with the subject; (ii) apartheid-style education still dominated the teaching and learning of Accounting; and (iii) despite numerous curriculum changes and revisions that dominated the educational landscape in South Africa, many teachers continued to follow old teaching strategies and approaches.

I have been lecturing students at a traditional university who want to pursue a career in teaching Accounting, Business Studies and/or Economics in a high school since 2011. These students have already completed a degree in commerce. Therefore, they already possess the disciplinary (subject) knowledge. The modules are called Method of Accounting, Method of Business Economics and Method of Economics. The broad purpose of these modules, which form part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme, is to empower students by providing them with the pedagogical knowledge (specific knowledge for teachers who will teach one of the above commerce subjects) needed to teach

these subjects in the FET Band in a school. Although these students are adequately trained in the content, I find it difficult to make them realise that ‘knowing your content’ forms one part of the work of an effective teacher. I want them to see learners as subjective epistemological beings, whose ‘voices’ and ‘cultures’ must be respected, especially in light of the historically repressive ideology of CNE and FP.

I also lecture two other modules – not directly linked to commerce, but directly linked to being a teacher. These modules, namely, Education Practice 1 and Education Practice 2, are situated in the BEd programme and basically cover general pedagogical knowledge. Although I have worked at two different universities, my purpose remains the same – that is, to train teachers.

Over the past 10 years of evaluating students doing their Teaching Practice (pre-service training) and especially whilst working on the ACE: Accounting course, I came across in-service teachers (teachers who are already employed) and Senior Education Specialists, who explained the situation with regards to teaching Accounting as part of the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) learning area (later in this thesis I explain where EMS fits into the schooling system). I discovered that many of the teachers teaching the Accounting aspects in the EMS learning area (especially in Grades 8 and 9) were not qualified or were under-qualified to teach those sections, therefore the learners do not get a solid background in Accounting. The learners lose interest in the Accounting section of EMS and consequently do not choose to do Accounting in the FET Band, seeing that Accounting is an elective subject.

The most important motivation for me to undertake this study was the discovery that teachers were not adequately qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the EMS curriculum. If EMS teachers are not qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the curriculum, it can result in learners not getting a solid background in basic Accounting. This situation can eventually result in many learners not choosing to do Accounting in the FET Band, or in those who do choose Accounting entering Grade 10 with insufficient knowledge of the subject.

My childhood experiences, experiences as school learner, and my professional experiences form the background against which I investigated the lived experiences of Accounting teachers. Particular focus will be placed on teachers' lived experience of how the curriculum revisions and various other challenges (for example, poor leadership, infrastructure of the school, attitude of learners) over the last 20 years affected Accounting teachers' implementation of the curriculum, more specifically the delivery of the content in the classroom. Lived experience falls within the ambit of a phenomenological paradigm and therefore this study will adopt a phenomenological approach.

### **1.3 Description of the research problem**

Internationally there is a rich repository of studies on school Accounting. For example, Graham (2013) explores how Accounting can be distinguished from other languages. McPhail, Paisey and Paisey (2010) examine the links between class, social deprivation and Accounting in Scottish schools. I will expand on these studies in Chapter Two. Nationally, however, there is a paucity of studies on school Accounting in general – especially phenomenological studies that investigate the lived experiences of Accounting teachers. A survey of the literature, which included both local journals and unpublished master's and doctoral work at different South African universities, revealed a study conducted in the Western Cape Province on how the subject Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) prepares learners for Accounting in Grade 10 (Schreuder, 2009). EMS is a Grade 9 subject that introduces learners to Economics, Business Studies and Accounting, and prepares them for further studies in Economics, Business Studies and/or Accounting in the FET Band. Amongst the many international studies on school Accounting and the few studies in South Africa, I came across one PhD thesis that contained elements of a phenomenologically-oriented study. The study was completed by Schreuder in 2014 and examines the teaching of Accounting in schools in the Western Cape Province with reference to the concept of quality. The aim of this study was to understand what professional development programmes Accounting teachers are engaging with and what the effect is of such initiatives (Schreuder, 2014). Schreuder's study focuses on



Accounting teachers' engagement with professional development programmes and their effects, whereas my study focuses on the holistic experiences of the Accounting teachers' lived world. Since I could not find many local studies on school Accounting, I conducted a preliminary study by interviewing a senior education specialist on challenges that Accounting teachers in the FET Band face. The interview took place at the end of April 2015. Several key findings emerged from this investigation: (i) FET Accounting teachers are frustrated with the poor content knowledge of the Grade 10 learners when they take the subject; (ii) the inadequate content knowledge of Grade 10 learners has its origin in the delivery of Accounting in the EMS subject in the General Education and Training (GET) Band; (iii) the two topics most FET Accounting teachers struggle with are the Cash Flow Statement, and Analysis and Interpretation of Financial Statements. Other minor findings from this investigation revealed that the number of learners choosing to do Accounting in the FET Band has dropped over the last 5 years – this holds true provincially and nationally. Consequently, Accounting teachers end up teaching subjects such as Life Orientation and/or Mathematical Literacy. These issues are systemic in nature and therefore warrant further investigation. It was also discovered that Accounting teachers are frustrated and disillusioned with the state of the education system, for example, inefficient leadership from the School Management Team (SMT), lack of parental support, learner apathy and low motivation of learners, poor work ethic and lack of self-discipline amongst learners. As a result, absenteeism amongst Accounting teachers is rife.

The effectiveness of Accounting as a school subject depends largely on the competencies of Accounting teachers. However, policy dictates what is expected of Accounting teachers. Research over the last decade has shown that policy-makers do not always consider the lived realities of teachers and the contexts in which they teach (Matoti, 2010). Because teachers are challenged by the call to teach under difficult circumstances, the workload implications of having to teach multiple grades, and as Schreuder (2009) revealed, sometimes having to first cover (or revise) the Grade 9 Accounting content in the EMS curriculum before starting the Grade 10 content, their experience of the way Accounting is taught in

many South African schools is negative. This study therefore reports on the lived experiences of Accounting teachers in an attempt to understand their lived world.

Against this background, the study aims specifically to establish how Accounting teachers in the FET Band are coping with the concerns and challenges they face. The findings might help us understand how the world of Accounting teachers influences the learners as well as the teaching and learning environment of Accounting. Ted Aoki (1999) refers to the *tensionality* between the ‘curriculum-as-lived’ and ‘curriculum-as-planned’. This alludes to the tension in a teacher between what is prescribed by policy (curriculum-as-planned) and the way the curriculum is experienced by teachers and learners (curriculum-as-lived). This means that there is much more happening in a classroom besides the teaching of the subject content. In other words, curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived manifest simultaneously. In Chapter Two I expand on both these concepts in more detail.

In order to establish how Accounting teachers are coping with (experiencing) simply being Accounting teachers, *this study aims to explore their inner landscapes*, which Palmer (2007) refers to as: the inner terrain of an individual (in this case an Accounting teacher); it answers the question about what is happening inside us as we do something – why do we do what we do. Palmer (2007) explains that another way to describe one’s inner landscape is to refer to it as one’s *soul*.

Furthermore, this study will endeavour to emphasise why a conversation with *teachers* (in this case *Accounting* teachers) matters for the future of Accounting.

## **1.4 Research questions**

### **1.4.1 Main research question**

What are the lived experiences of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province?

### **1.4.2 Subsidiary research questions**

- How do Accounting teachers experience the circumstances (contexts) in which they teach?
- How did the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decades impact on their disposition towards the curriculum?
- How do their convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which the Accounting teachers experience their work?
- What motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do?

### **1.5 Purpose of study**

In order to establish how Accounting teachers are coping with (experiencing) simply being Accounting teachers, this study intends to explore their inner landscapes – in other words, the study will answer the question: Why do (certain) Accounting teachers do what they do. (The word ‘certain’ is in brackets because the findings cannot be generalised – each person is unique.)

In order to gain insight into how Accounting teachers experience simply being *Accounting* teachers, one needs to determine the possible challenges they face and how they are coping with these challenges, how the changes in the educational landscape over the last two decades might affect teacher morale and job satisfaction, and how institutional imperatives, for example, maintaining infrastructure at school, learner attitudes, management at school, departmental demands and workload, affect them, that is, affect their inner landscapes. The ultimate focus of this study is on understanding how Accounting teachers think, how they feel, how they react, who they are, and what motivates them to do what they do.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

Lived experience is at the heart of the educational experience. Phenomenology was the foundation of William Pinar’s work on *currere* and informed the work of the greatest Canadian curriculum scholar, Tetsuo (Ted) Aoki and his notion of curriculum-as-lived after phenomenology was introduced to him by his student Max van Manen. *Currere* means ‘to run the course’, which is about the

educational experience. By studying the life histories of teachers from their own perspective, it is possible to learn how they understand their professional practice (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Olson and Craig, 2001). This study, therefore, provides new insights on phenomenological work in the field of Curriculum Studies in South Africa, specifically with regards to the subject of Accounting and its theoretical contribution provides a more nuanced understanding of Pinar's and Aoki's work by looking at their understanding of curriculum through the lense of Merleau-Ponty.

The insights generated in this study could be useful for policy-makers, particularly useful to those involved in initial teacher training (e.g. lecturers) and in-service teacher education (such as senior education specialists) in order to gain an understanding of the experiences of Accounting teachers.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

Originally the study would have involved eight purposively selected Accounting teachers. However, two of the teachers withdrew from the study because of their commitments at work. I could not replace these teachers and arrange interviews with new participants, since it was already very close to the end of the timeframe allotted to me by the Research Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) within which to conduct the interviews. After analysing the data of five research participants, I made a subjective assessment (decision) not to include the data of the sixth research participant, because the data had reached 'saturation point' (Creswell, 2008, pp. 257-258). In other words, no new information could be added to the existing themes identified in the study (Creswell, 2008). Ultimately this study involved five purposively selected Accounting teachers. Three teachers were selected from historically disadvantaged schools<sup>5</sup> and two teachers from historically advantaged schools<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Historically disadvantaged schools: During the apartheid era these schools were attended by Coloured, Black, and Indian learners. According to Kamper (2008, p. 2) historically disadvantaged schools are basically poor schools and are typified by, among other features, school environments that are typically characterised by unkempt premises, rundown buildings, damaged and inadequate furniture, poor waste-management facilities, substandard toilet and sanitation facilities, and physical danger areas.

According to Groenewald (2004, p. 11), two to ten participants are suitable for a phenomenological study. In some published articles authors only used 1 research participant. For example, in describing an applied method for undertaking phenomenological explication of interview transcripts Devenish (2002) used 1 research participant, and Koopman, Le Grange and De Mink (2016) described the lived experience of one Physical Science teacher.

This research was conducted in the suburbs around the city of Cape Town, which is situated in the Western Cape Province in South Africa (see Chapter Four, Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). The target population of this study was five participants, namely, five Accounting teachers in and around Cape Town. I looked for Accounting teachers who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). In other words, I purposefully selected Accounting teachers who have been teaching for about 10 years or longer, that is, those who have experience in teaching both the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the current curriculum, namely, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

## 1.8 Introducing phenomenology

Phenomenology is the science of lived experience. The term ‘phenomenology’ was coined for the first time more than two centuries ago by Hegel in his famous work *Phänomenologie des Geistes* – even though the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Husserl is considered as the father of phenomenology. Husserl (1967) argues that experience provides insight into the mental residues of individuals, that is, how they think. The mental residues – or what Husserl (1970) calls the ‘eidetic residuums’ – of individuals can be accessed by allowing a person to share his experiences with others. Understanding these experiences enables us to establish how individuals think and it allows us to get behind the reasoning for the decisions they make. Husserlian philosophy is more centred on human

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<sup>6</sup> Historically advantaged schools: During the apartheid era these schools were attended by White learners. The environments at these schools are in stark contrast to those at historically disadvantaged schools.

consciousness than on universal abstractions and it is through consciousness, he argues, that we are present to the world (Husserl, 1967). The essence of consciousness refers to the intentional acts that point towards objects or something (Van Manen, 1990). In this study the ‘something’ refers to how Accounting teachers experience simply being teachers – that is, experience being *Accounting* teachers. Kruger-Ross (2015) explored this question in a more general sense by looking at the *Being* in education. In his study he asks the question: “What does it mean to be a teacher?” (p. 3). To answer this question he applied a phenomenological ontological approach to explore the lived world of the teacher. This approach is grounded within Heideggerian phenomenology. For Heidegger (1927/1967) ontology is referred to as the study of *Being* (that is, *Dasein* – this term will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two, but in short *Dasein* means Being). Heidegger, a former student of Husserl’s, took his ideas further by arguing that one cannot simply consider the cognitive on its own, but that one should also consider the context within which the individual functions. Heidegger believed that the environment within which individual cognition functions influences the consciousness of the person. He argued that within every physical space there is always a mood and the person entering that space moves in behind that mood, therefore the person becomes that space and vice versa. In agreement with Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) argues that the space within which an individual functions affects the way that individual feels and therefore it is fair to reason that places, events and things give meaning to our existence.

In the words of Maistry (2001, p. 160), in order to “generate the most convincing description of the lived experiences of” Accounting teachers, it is important to look at both the being (teacher) and the context (school) and all its associated activities, amongst others, infrastructure of the school, attitude of the learners, management support, the curriculum. Such a study could reveal why teachers do what they do when it comes to curriculum implementation and decision-making in the classroom, how they cope with change (curriculum changes), what motivated them to become Accounting teachers, and why they choose to remain in the

teaching profession. To understand the being in education (i.e. the teacher) is not only a question of epistemology, but also one of ontology.

In essence this study attempts to unravel the ‘truth’ behind certain decisions made by the research participants regarding their work (that is, being Accounting teachers). In this study the word ‘truth’ refers to subjective truth. Heidegger uncovered an ancient meaning of the word truth in the Greek word *aletheia* (Kruger-Ross, 2015, p. 2). According to the Greek translation, *aletheia* means the interplay between revealing and concealing of an entity or being (p. 2). Heidegger avers that one cannot really ascertain the truth unless one uncovers that which is revealed **and** that which is concealed – for only then can truth be considered *aletheia* (p. 2).

## **1.9 Research design and methodology**

### **1.9.1 Method and methodology**

Van Manen (1990) explains the term methodology when used in research to refer to “the philosophical framework that underpins the fundamental assumptions and characteristics of a human science perspective (p. 27). In addition, Van Manen (1990) claims that the key to quality research depends on the methodology applied.

Levering (2006) believes that phenomenology is the most appropriate methodology to use when we are reporting on other people’s experiences. He states that when people narrate their stories, they also interpret their experiences in their own minds whilst speaking.

Husserl maintains that a phenomenological approach only requires the researcher to describe the participants’ experiences, whilst Heidegger believes that this is not enough. He holds that the researcher has to consider the ontological aspect - meaning the realities of the participants. I will therefore, describe the participants’ experiences bearing in mind their context.

A phenomenological study focuses exclusively on human consciousness. The method of phenomenology is reflective – this means all modes of consciousness

(based on experiences) must draw the researcher to the mental content of the individual by embracing the phenomenological attitude. To do so the researcher has to:

- enter into the lived world of the participant through his or her descriptions of experience – focusing on what Husserl (1967, p xix) calls going ‘back to the things themselves’;
- dwell within the horizons of the implicit meaning of the text (transcripts); explicate the phenomena holistically (the totality of situations, events, cultural values, to which the participant orients himself, and about which he has consciousness); and
- interpret the frames of reference (interpreting the knowledge an individual holds with reference to the context within which he or she finds himself or herself).

### 1.9.2 Data construction

According to Hycner (1985), the method depends on the phenomenon – this even includes the types of participants. Therefore purposive sampling was selected as the most appropriate way to identify the research participants. The key criterion was that all participants had to be FET Accounting teachers who have taught the subject for about 10 years or longer. In choosing the participants for this study I also had to consider age, ethnicity, gender and area. Because of financial constraints the study was limited to schools in and around Cape Town. The primary sources of data collection were interviews and field notes.

### 1.9.3 Research instruments

#### a) Interviews

The interview focused on the teachers’ experiences and their impact on their lives as teachers. The most appropriate way to ascertain such information is to use unstructured in-depth phenomenological interviews. Interviews allow the researcher to get inside the minds of people in order to understand and interpret their views on different matters, according to Le Grange (2000, p. 5). He also



mentions that most researchers use interviews as a magnifying glass to enter into the respondent's experiences. Le Grange (ibid.) further emphasises that interviews allow researchers to make direct contact with their research participants. In order to build trust between the interviewee and the interviewer (researcher), I would have conducted an informal interview with the teachers to gain information about their background. The aim of the second interview would have been to gain a deeper insight into the teachers' world of teaching. Unfortunately, as a result of time constraints because of the teachers' work commitments I could conduct only one interview with the research participants. I therefore combined (what would have been) Interview One and Interview Two. In phenomenology teachers are allowed the space to tell their stories as the researcher probes into their thinking to elicit valuable information about their lives and how this influences their decisions in the classroom. In phenomenological interviews one of the guidelines that must be followed is bracketing (Hycner, 1985). This involves separating oneself from the interviewee's responses and allowing the data to speak for itself.

It is essential to interview people in a respectful and sensitive manner about their experiences. It is very important that the researcher does not intrude on the personal lives of the participants. Unlike social dialogue, the researcher needs to be mindful of issues of power therefore, s/he has to ask authentic questions (Price 2003, p. 1). Mertens (2010), Paechter (1998) and Sollund (2008) agree with Price regarding issues of power when they suggest that the interviewer should skilfully and diplomatically negotiate the complex power dynamics between him/herself and the interviewee. During the interviews I was very aware of the need to be considerate about the participants' experiences. I tried (as far as possible) to bracket myself off from the participants and let them relate their stories (lived experiences) without interference from me.

The main research question that this study aims to explore is: What are the lived experiences of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province? For this purpose the study draws on Husserl's (1984) 'lifeworld' theory, as it includes phenomena such as intentionality, temporality and spatiality that form the essence

of our existence. All these terms will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two, but in essence Husserl's (1984) 'lifeworld' theory represents an imminent transcendent world within which 'every life-praxis is engaged' (p. 121). Based on this premise, our lifeworld refers to our everyday existence in and through which we live our lives. Lifeworld can be described as an intuited, common, subjective, inter-subjective and pre-given world that is characterized by what Husserl (1984) terms the 'natural attitude', where the world in which we find ourselves is perceived without reflection. In simple terms the lifeworld forms the foundation of understanding our lives, health, suffering and wellbeing. Therefore no human being can be fully understood unless we take into account their lifeworld.

Questions that sought to understand the lived experiences of Accounting teachers were divided into various themes. In Theme One the focus of the questions was on the autobiographical details and personal background of the participants. Here questions such as where they grew up, their individual experiences with Accounting at school level and how they finally ended up in the teaching profession were pertinent. The answers to these questions allowed the researcher to construct an autobiography of each participant that summarised the early experiences and emotions such as fears, disappointments and other feelings they encountered at school, at university or technikon, and how they ended up doing a teaching qualification in Accounting. Hence, this theme will provide insight into 'who' they are and will reveal, amongst other things, why they entered the profession.

The second theme focused on the teachers' subjective views of the current situation in their schools and of the profession – in other words, how the changes in the educational landscape affected their morale. Here the most important question is: How do they feel about the profession they find themselves in with specific reference to being an Accounting teacher? This question will be followed by another important one: Why do they feel the way they do about (specifically) being an Accounting teacher? The answers to these questions will provide insight into the 'lived' or 'physical' space (context) the teachers find themselves in and whether or not this physical 'space' has a negative or positive influence on them.

The answers to these questions will also uncover the consciousness of the participants to give meaning to why they act and behave in a particular way.

Theme Three focuses on the teacher and the Accounting curriculum, and how the teacher engages with the curriculum. Teachers are governed by curriculum questions such as: How did the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decades impact on their disposition towards the curriculum? How do they experience the latest version of the national curriculum, namely, the CAPS for Accounting? What are the main challenges and strengths of CAPS for Accounting? All these questions will provide details for a broader understanding of the curriculum and whether Accounting teachers at the classroom interface are active implementers of the curriculum. These questions will also provide insight into whether or not they received adequate training to understand the content and other associated challenges. All these and various other questions formed part of the Interview Schedule. (For full details of all the questions see Appendix E: Interview Schedule).

#### b) Field notes

Field notes are secondary data-collection methods that are used, because the human mind tends to forget quickly. The researcher's field notes are crucial to complement the data gathered from the interview. Field notes include incidents that took place whilst in the field, for example, what happened during the interview and why? Here the focus is on the interviewee's mood, non-verbal cues or behaviour. According to Groenewald (2004, p. 15), field notes also include the following:

- Observational notes – what happened notes. This involves the use of the senses to describe interview responses;
- Theoretical notes – the researcher's thinking during the interview or reflective notes;
- Methodological notes – reminders, instructions or critique of oneself about the process.

#### 1.9.4 Storage of data

Each interview conducted was labelled and stored on an audio-recorder. Each interview was labelled, for example: participant, date of interview and folder (KdM, B01/01).

#### 1.9.5 Explication of the data

Hycner (1985) refers to ‘explication’ as staying as close to the truth as reported by the participant. To do so, the researcher must be mindful of the context and the experience of the participant. Phenomenologists are reluctant to focus on specific steps in explicating the data. In this regard, Keen (1975, p. 41) states that phenomenology cannot be reduced to a ‘cookbook’ set of instructions. Although Hycner (1985) noted that the data explication process is a very messy one, he nevertheless provides concrete guidelines for the explication process. This study adopted Hycner’s data explication process, the steps of which can be broadly summarized as: (i) bracketing and phenomenological reduction; (ii) delineating units of meaning; (iii) clustering of units of meaning to form themes; (iv) summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it; (v) extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

As I mentioned above, this study investigated the lived experience of teachers, more specifically, Accounting teachers. Hence, this study is located in the field of education. Consequently, I would like to state that the explication of the data will not be a deep philosophical one. This study will draw on the philosophical theories of philosophers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and will apply these philosophical theories to the field of education, specifically to the lived experience of Accounting teachers.

#### 1.10 Trustworthiness

Husserl (1970) developed the theory of phenomenology with the aim of finding the foundation of all knowledge. Each person experiences the world from a particular spatio-temporal setting, which becomes the person’s subjective reality. Husserl avers that it is this subjective reality that becomes a person’s eidetic residuum (the mindset or ideas or consciousness), which eventually becomes the

person's belief system. In order to sketch the person's subjective reality fairly accurately, Husserl (1967, p. xx) advocates that the researcher has to "bracket" him/herself. "Bracketing" oneself from the research participant, allows the researcher to go "back to the things themselves".

Phenomenology, therefore, allows us to 'hear the teachers' own voices', learn about *their* 'lived experience' without giving our own interpretation based on our lived world – we need to report the teachers' voices by bracketing ourselves from their world. I tried to approach every interview without any preconceived ideas about any of the participants and their responses, but not with the understanding that it can be done as Husserl prescribes. In addition, I allowed the participants to describe their experiences without interpreting their words as far as possible.

### **1.11 Ethical considerations**

After permission was obtained from the WCED: Research Directorate to conduct the interviews with the Accounting teachers, (see Appendix B), I drafted consent forms for all interviewees (see to Appendix C). Diener and Crandall define informed consent as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions" (1978, p. 57). For this study there were several aspects that had to be explained to the participants to ensure their informed consent, namely, the purpose of the research project, procedures, reporting and dissemination of the research; right to withdraw from and rejoin the project; rights and obligations with respect to confidentiality and non-disclosure of the research, and participants and outcomes.

Although the WCED: Research Directorate sent letters to the principals at the schools where I proposed to interview some of the Accounting teachers, I also made contact with these principals to introduce myself and inform them in more detail about the purpose of my research and the interviews I planned to conduct. I used pseudonyms for all participants. In this way I protected the anonymity of research participants (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992) as far as possible.

Furthermore, I did not disrupt the daily timetable of the school during the data-construction process.

In addition to the above ethical issues that were cleared with the WCED in submitting application for fieldwork, all relevant documentation was submitted to Stellenbosch University's Ethics Committee (Human Research) for ethical clearance of the research project (see to Appendix A).

### **1.12 Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The structure is outlined below.

*Chapter One* orients the reader to the study, describes the problem statement, the research question, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and its scope. It also provides a short initial literature review, describes the research methodology and the trustworthiness of the data. Lastly, Chapter One reports on the ethical considerations pertaining to the study, and presents an outline of each chapter.

*Chapter Two* provides an extensive literature review used to support the study. The literature review expands on the theory of phenomenology. The theory of phenomenology serves as a framework against which the findings are analysed and discussed. The concepts of 'curriculum' and 'phenomenology' are discussed next, followed by a differentiation between curriculum-as-lived and curriculum-as-planned. The next section gives a description of the nature of lived experience, as well as reviewed studies that have been conducted on lived experience, Accounting teachers and the Accounting curriculum, curriculum change in South Africa, and the effect of the changes in the curriculum on the way that teachers work. The last section of Chapter Two explains the data explication framework used to analyse the findings of this study.

*Chapter Three* elucidates the research methodology I have employed, namely, phenomenology. The first section of the chapter focuses on the difference between method and methodology, while the next section distinguishes between quantitative/positivist and phenomenological research methodologies. The

sections that follow explain the research method, which includes how the sample was constituted, the application of the research instruments (emphasising the phenomenological interview), and clearly outlines the steps of each participants' transcript analysis.

In *Chapter Four* I describe the research setting, that is, the geographical environment of each school and the context within which the school functions.

*Chapter Five* focuses on the data explication process.

*Chapter Six* first summarises the data in line with the research objectives and at the same time provides a coherent summary of its significance to the field. Secondly, the chapter presents the implications of the findings, followed by recommendations for future research. Chapter Six concludes with some personal reflections of my journey as a novice phenomenological researcher.

### **1.13 Summary**

In Chapter One I illustrate the origin of this research by describing my own early introduction to and later experience in Accounting. The problem regarding the un- or under-qualified EMS teachers to teach the Accounting aspects of the Grade 9 curriculum, and the findings of my discussion with a senior education specialist regarding the challenges around Accounting in the FET Band, contextualises this study. In addition, the purpose, significance and scope of the study are explicated Chapter One. Furthermore, the main research question and subsidiary questions are stated. In the literature review I give a brief summary of the theory underpinning phenomenology by discussing Husserl's notion of 'consciousness', highlighting Heidegger's explanation of 'being' in education, and by referring to Merleau-Ponty's comments on 'space' and its effect on an individual. The rest of Chapter One gives an overview of the research design and methodology, trustworthiness and ethical considerations. Finally, the chapter concludes with a succinct outline of the structure of this dissertation.

The next chapter expands on the literature used to support this study as well as the explication framework that was designed to analyse and discuss the findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

We shall find in ourselves and nowhere else the unity and true meaning of phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. viii)

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This study is a phenomenological investigation into the lived experience of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province. It attempts to ascertain the object of direct consciousness in the minds of the participants regarding their work by specifically focusing on the following questions: (i) How do Accounting teachers experience the circumstances (contexts) in which they teach? (ii) How did the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decades impact on their disposition towards the curriculum? (iii) How do their own convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which the Accounting teachers experience their work? (iv) What motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do?

The first section of this chapter will unpack what phenomenology is and its philosophical oeuvre. Since this study endeavours to understand the consciousness of Accounting teachers, the study will draw on Edmund Husserl's theory of *lived experience (lebenswelt)*, Martin Heidegger's ontological notion of *being* or *Dasein*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *lived body* theory, and the views of various other phenomenologists. The scholarly contributions of these philosophers will allow the researcher to elucidate the mindset of each Accounting teacher participating in this study and his or her disposition towards the teaching and learning of Accounting. To this end this study will provide insights into what Accounting teachers think about, feel and believe when they teach the subject. The second section examines William Pinar's work on the curriculum and phenomenology as well as Ted Aoki's views on curriculum-as-lived and curriculum-as-planned. The third section describes the nature of lived experience and it will review studies that have been conducted on Accounting teachers and the Accounting curriculum, curriculum change in South Africa, and



the effect of the changes in the curriculum on how teachers work. Finally, the last section explains the data explicitation framework used to analyse the findings.

## 2.2 What is phenomenology?

Phenomenology is generally understood as a disciplinary field in philosophy, or as Husserl (1970) calls it a movement in the history of philosophy. Phenomenology, like philosophy *per se*, places the nature of human existence as the focus of rigorous scrutiny. As far back as the Aristotelian extrapolations to this day the issue of being (*Dasein*) remains the focal point of phenomenology. Husserl's (1970) phenomenology originated when he saw Europe lying in ruins at the end of World War II. Terry Eagleton (1983) notes that as Husserl witnessed and reflected on this sardonic crisis (the European crisis), he realised the damage that the natural sciences were causing to nature and our human nature. In Husserl's view, the crisis was unavoidable as the predominant framework of societal knowledge placed mathematics and science in an authoritative position that elevated far above lived experience. Husserl (1970) contended that modern human beings needed a new philosophy in which lived experience should significantly transcend mathematics and science. The fact that mathematics and the natural sciences were elevated to a much higher level than lived experience, a phenomenon which was firmly rejected by Husserl, underscored the repudiation of the absurdness of science. Through his repudiation of the sciences as superior to lived experience, he [re]humanised the latter. From this emerging Husserlian outlook lived experience became the essence that [re]constituted our human existence. Hence, making lived experience the essence of human consciousness marked the start of the phenomenological movement.

In the context of the European crisis at the time Husserl introduced the term 'lifeworld' as a pivotal point for reflections on the 'crisis' of science and the 'humanities'. Here Husserl uses different words to describe the lifeworld such as 'pre-given world', 'pre-scientific world', 'pre-theoretical world', 'surrounding world', 'the intuitively given world', and so forth. In the Husserlian tradition experience is viewed as a 'legitimizing source of cognition' (Husserl, 1983, p. 44). This is a point Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) supports and expands on, when

he argues further that experience is also the most immediate ‘source’ and the ultimate measuring stick of human consciousness (p. 23). Based on this supposition, phenomenology is not a science based in experience, but a science derived from experience. Therefore experience is the foundational structure for acquiring insight and the structures of experience constitute an object of phenomenological investigation.

An essential feature of phenomenology is that it investigates conscious experience as it is experienced from a subjective standpoint. Examples of various types of experience studied in phenomenology are perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, social activity, embodied action, and so forth, which reflect modes of consciousness. As a field of philosophy, phenomenology should be distinguished from other major fields of philosophy, such as ontology (the study of Being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), logic (the study of valid reasoning) and ethics (the study of right and wrong action). Essentially the task of a phenomenologist is to explicate human behaviour as a direct object of human consciousness. Husserl’s view about consciousness does not involve the biological nature of consciousness but the psychological nature of consciousness.

In the next section I discuss the foundations of Husserlian phenomenology and its appropriateness for this study.

### 2.2.1 Husserl’s phenomenology and its significance for this study

In 1922 in *Pariser Vorträge* Husserl developed the five key concepts on which his phenomenological thinking hinges, that is, (i) *epoché*, (ii) *intentionality and constitution*, (iii) *transcendental ego and the theory of reduction*, (iv) *intersubjectivity and the transcendental realm*, and (v) *logic*. In this chapter I will focus on the foundational essences of his movement, namely *intuition* and *intentionality* and the way that they relate to human consciousness. The *epoché* will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three as a means to direct the researcher in the data-construction process. Husserlian phenomenology is concerned with the idea of human consciousness which pertains to a state of awareness or the

phenomenon towards which a person's mindset is directed. This means that consciousness represents a memory of an event which occurred at a specific time and place. It represents a recollection of events that constituted different experiences impressed on the consciousness. The human mind has the creative ability to bring back into existence concrete events through a process of reflection. What makes Husserlian phenomenology different from all other schools of phenomenological thought is his lack of interest in the physical basis of consciousness. Husserl explains 'consciousness' (in German, *Bewußtsein*) as entailing perception, remembering, imagining, judging, hoping, fearing and so forth. These are descriptive terms that are all modes of consciousness. In other words, Husserlian phenomenology is more interested in describing human consciousness and its various manifestations with a specific focus on the essences that constitute human consciousness (Husserl, 1983, pp. 80-81).

Essences in Husserl's view do not refer to facts, but rather to the foundations of the essential structures of consciousness and its various modes (1967). These foundations include *intuition* (*wesenserschauung*), which is projected by the eidetic variation. The eidetic variation is an individual's ability to construct different mental images of various objects, whether they are real or unreal. Intuition allows the individual's mind the tendency to reflect on all mental computations and projections. Husserl notes that reflection is not some superficial view of an object, but a deep engagement in which the observer carefully examines or dissects an object (1967). During reflection, the attitudes of people, their ideas and their overall livelihood are subject to evaluation. In other words, when an individual experiences an event, he or she firstly experiences a state of awareness of the event; secondly, processes the event; and thirdly, reflects on the event (*erlebst*). All modes of consciousness are involved to make reflection possible.

Another essential structure of essence is intentionality. Brentano via Gerner describes intentionality as follows:

... every mental phenomenon includes something as an object within itself, although they do not always do so in the same way. In presentation

*(vorstellung)* something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on ... (in Gerner, 2001, p. 547)

This quote draws attention to the directedness of the human's consciousness of a particular experience. In other words, love, hate, desire and so forth are all different modes of consciousness, which suggests that an individual is always conscious of something as a way of being directed towards something. This means that intentionality is always directed towards the of-ness or about-ness of consciousness. Husserl (1967) alludes to these phenomena (the of-ness and/or about-ness of consciousness) as intentional experiences that the mind is directed towards. Consequently, fearing, hating, desiring, perceiving, imagining, hoping are all examples of intentional experiences. Thus, intentional experience is a mental process or entity that exists in consciousness. Husserl emphasises that in most cases intentional experiences are directed towards entities that are not mental entities.

Intentionality is also the epistemological disposition equated with knowledge by means of "acquaintance", "knowledge about", "pure data" and "inferences", "presentations" and "constructions", the "given" and the "interpreted", and so forth (Husserl, 1967, p. xxvii). These conceptions relate to how experience is perceived, because according to Husserl (1967), experience is a complex matrix of events of which the data have both an external and an inherent supposition. Although external represents the givenness of the data, their organisational principles are internal to the object. Stated differently, although an experience as observed is given as 'pure data' and provides insight into 'knowledge about' a person's consciousness inherent in the experience, it is the psychological interpretation of the experience that needs to be unveiled. This therefore raises the question: How does phenomenology as a philosophy relate to this study?

Firstly, Husserlian phenomenology as a method will provide insight into what Accounting teachers might fear, hate, desire, or perceive about their subject and their role and responsibilities with reference to the curriculum. All these states of awareness or conditions of existence are deeply embedded in consciousness. By

drawing on Husserl's notion of 'intuition', the researcher can unpack both the reflective and unreflective lifeworld of the research participants so as to construct their natural attitude, such as the values and norms of his or her practical life as well as the phenomenological attitude derived from his or her immediate experiences with objects in the immediate surroundings. The next section expounds on Heidegger's theory of being and how it relates to this study.

### 2.2.2 Heidegger's theory of being and its significance for this study

While Husserlian phenomenology focused mainly on the intentional directedness of human consciousness or a human being's directed mental content, Heidegger was more interested in the 'phenomenon of being'. According to Heidegger (1927/1967), a person's thinking or awareness is always directed towards some object in the world. Husserl's work (1967; 1970; 1980) revolves around human consciousness, hence the phrase 'returning to the things themselves', which refers to awareness, intentionality and so forth. His endeavour is to isolate human consciousness from the body to describe or explain pure or absolute consciousness along with the phenomenological reduction. To do so, in his work Husserl attempts to disembodiment (empty) the individual and transport it to a realm of pure consciousness. Heidegger's discourse, which is an extension of Husserl's idea around purity of consciousness, contextualised experience by shifting the focus to understanding 'transparent coping' (Heidegger, 1927/1967, p. 23). This is because he believed that the human condition is a combination of activities and within these activities there is a lot of 'coping'<sup>7</sup> taking place. 'Transparent coping' takes place when a person holds no memory of some of the activities he or she was exposed to throughout the day, for example, opening a door, driving a car, or switching on the television. A person does not think about how to turn the door handle, or how to shift between the gears of a car, or how to use the television remote control. In all these activities the process is so transparent that it does not pass through the person's consciousness. In other words, the person's activities are not characterised by conscious decisions or aware states of mind, but

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<sup>7</sup> Coping: This word is not used in a sense of judging a teacher's actions but it is used the way Heidegger uses it in *Being and Time* when he refers to the carpenter as *coping* in the situation, that is, coping in his experiences with the hammer.

are rather a way of coping with the human condition. These aspects are central to Heidegger's phenomenology and are subservient to what he refers to as "fundamental ontology" (Cerbone, 2006). Fundamental ontology hinges on the question of being and what it means *to be*. In Heidegger's magnum opus *Being and Time* he attempts to rekindle the debate about 'what it means to be' and 'the human being's place in this world'.

In an attempt to address these issues Heidegger (1927/1967) avers that we need to start with the self and the relational space between the self and the world of objects. To understand the 'self', Heidegger (1927/1967) points out, is a question of understanding *Dasein*. Cerbone (2006) notes that *Dasein* (in German, 'existence') is a compound word consisting of "*da*" (which means "there" or "here") and "*sein*" (which means "being"). *Sein* has a different meaning to words such as "man", "human being", "homo sapiens" and so on, because these words have different meanings in subfields such as theology, psychology and anthropology. Heidegger uses this term *Dasein* as an 'idiosyncratic interlocutor' that is translated from the German as 'being the there/here', also translated as 'earning your daily bread' to separate it from everyday terminology such as man, human being and so forth. Heidegger's main argument here is based on the premise that the disciplines mentioned (theology, psychology, anthropology) most of the time simply ignore the pre-ontological meaning of *Dasein*. Thus conceived, if we want to get a fairly accurate account of the term *Dasein*, we must start by articulating or spelling out the pre-ontological description of what it means "to be" or "being there/here". This pre-ontological connectedness to the meaning of *Dasein* relates to being-in-the-world or the being's capacity for being in the world. The focus is therefore not so much on how people think or what they believe in, but in how they act. It is in the process of 'being' or 'acting' in the world that a person's thoughts are made explicit. This 'unveiling of a person's thoughts' Heidegger refers to as the phenomenological reduction.

According to Heidegger (1927/1967), *Dasein* has a threefold structure. Firstly, it has disposition. This means in everyday human activities or 'being-in-the-world' all activities or events are classified as important or not so important. In this

classification of events or activities, humans have a general tendency to give more credence or prominence to issues and activities that need their urgent attention. This classification contributes to depth and rigour in the execution and performance of the activity/event/task. Another important aspect that is equally as important as the classification of activities/tasks is the mood that prevails when a person enters the situation. Mood (emotional condition) is always present and can show as friendly, or unfriendly, threatening or calm.

Secondly, *Dasein* has a specific structure or discourse. This so-called ‘structure’ or ‘discourse’ shapes the world for the individual based on the context of its significance. Human activities can be broken up into different structures. A carpenter, for example, can look at the hammer as an object with which he can hammer nails into timber; it can also be used as a nail puller, or it can simply be seen as a basic object with a wooden handle and a steel head tied to the handle. This speaks to the referential totality of the object and the different ways in which the object can be used.

Thirdly, *Dasein* is always pressing towards an objective. This means in every human activity the central focus is to complete an activity for the sake of someone or something. In this context *Dasein* is viewed as an activity or ‘being-in-the-world’ as pressing towards the future and can be viewed as embodying the interrelatedness of the past, present and the future. For example, when a carpenter is busy putting on a roof of a house, his or her focus is on completing the project. This activity can be mapped out as having a past, a present moment and a future, which is when the task will be completed. This notion of *Dasein* as pressing towards the future invokes the concept of time and connotes the carpenter as a ‘coping being’ in time or as being immersed or embedded in time. The next section, will clarify how Heidegger’s structure of *Dasein* relates to this study.

#### a) *Dasein* and the world of the Accounting teacher

*Dasein* as disposition refers to the nature of a teacher’s job. Some aspects of a teacher’s duties are considered more important than others. This is predicated on the idea of deadlines, tasks, assignments, administration and so forth that he or she

considers to be important. During this process there is a lot of coping going on that impacts on or affects the way the teacher performs or completes the task. This also relates to phenomena pertaining to completing the prescribed curriculum. In this case the teacher will classify some aspects as important and others as not so important. For example, does the teacher do equal justice to all aspects of the content? Is the delivery of the content aligned with the principles of the CAPS? How does the teacher cope in these situations? In what way do the conditions in which the teacher finds himself or herself promote quality teaching and learning? This study will provide insight into the mood that exists while the teacher performs the tasks at hand.

*Dasein* as discourse focuses on how the world of the teacher is already laid out or pre-determined/designed with respect to the execution of his or her duties. This refers to the context of significance that drives the agenda of Accounting teachers. From this perspective Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein* as a discourse can zoom in on the curriculum and how the curriculum predetermines the teacher's role in the Accounting classroom. This refers to the teacher-in-the-midst-of-the-Accounting-classroom and how he or she approaches the teaching and learning environment. This information will shed light on how the teacher enacts the prescribed curriculum and why they do what they do. How does the teacher articulate the complex space of *curriculum-as-planned* and *curriculum-as-lived*? Another important issue pertains to how the identities of the teachers are discursively shaped by the prescribed Accounting curriculum?

*Dasein* as pressing towards an objective refers to the impact of time on the delivery and completion of the curriculum. Aspects such as resources and the application thereof can become a barrier to the delivery of the curriculum and an obstacle in relation to how the teacher projects himself or herself in the classroom. The teacher's views about the pace-setters and whether the timeframes are realistic within which to engage the learners with high knowledge and skills as prescribed in the CAPS curriculum are also related to Heidegger's *Dasein* as pressing towards an objective. In the next section, I turn my attention to Maurice



Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'lived body theory' and his contribution to the field of phenomenology as well as how his work will apply to this study.

### 2.2.3 Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' and its significance for this study

This study draws on Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'lived body theory' to construct an interpretive anticipatory narrative of the lived experiences of Accounting teachers in selected schools. By taking the 'lived body theory' into account, the study attempts to reveal the thickness of lived space, which is often silent and invisible, and shapes and influences the relationship that Accounting teachers have with their learners and colleagues. Merleau-Ponty explains this:

A Being that is not posited because it has no need to be, because it is silently behind all our affirmations, negations and even behind all formulated questions, not that it is a matter of imprisoning it in our chatter, but because philosophy is the reconversion of silence and speech into one another...: It is the experience ... still mute which we are concerned with leading to the pure expression of its own meaning (1968, p. 129).

Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' also proved useful in determining how valuable lived space is in understanding teaching and learning. In the next section I will first explain the concept 'body' in the Merleau-Pontian tradition followed by 'space' or the 'world' in which the body functions. After clarifying the concepts that constitute the 'lived body theory', I present a detailed explanation of what the 'lived body theory' entails.

The foundation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology rests on two intertwined singular aspects, namely, (i) the 'body' or 'self', and (ii) the 'world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). In this tradition 'body' (self) is viewed from a different perspective than it is for phenomenologists such as Husserl and Heidegger. The reason for this is that Merleau-Ponty (ibid.) views the body as "the point of contact between a material world and a mental representation of the world" (Rabil, 1967, p. 25). From this perspective the body is seen as the centre of action

and this action he describes as an expression of the ‘will’, which automatically gives the body intelligibility and privileged metaphysical status. Thus Merleau-Ponty argues that “we are our bodies” (Lilja, 2013, p. 2). This means the body acts in the world by moving around, moving objects around in search of meaning, by observing different objects, and by directing the flow of information through action. However, a person cannot step outside his or her body to observe the body from the outside. So it is through the body that the individual comes into contact with the world and gets to know the world. Within the context of this study the teacher represents a body and is connected to other bodies such as the learners, colleagues, parents and so forth. The teacher is acting out in the school to observe and to see how learners behave and respond to the teaching and learning of Accounting. This study is interested in understanding this body (namely, the teacher) in that world (namely, the school and especially in the classroom).

It is important to know that in the Merleau-Pontian tradition the body has its own rules and laws that govern its perceptual power. Rabil (1967) cites Schopenhauer and writes “I am my body” and therefore “I live my body” (p. 26). Schopenhauer asserts that this statement is only true if no reflection takes place, because when a person reflects he or she gets lost in his or her thoughts, causing the body to become an object of the mind. The body therefore is the root of the personality and individuality. In anticipating Sartre, Merleau-Ponty cites this example from Valéry:

You capture my image, my appearance; I capture yours. You are not me, since you see me and I do not see myself. What I lack is the me that you see. And what you lack is the you that I see. And no matter how far we advance in our mutual understanding, as much as we reflect, so much will be different ... (Rabil, 1967, p. 29).

In line with the above citation, Sartre (1956, pp. 294-296) draws the distinction between the ‘I’ ‘in-itself’ and the ‘I’ ‘for-itself’. In addition, Sartre apprehends the images that he captures with his eyes by seeing the other, but he cannot see the seeing that is taking place in his body. Another important point he alludes to is how the body with all its constituent parts reveals an aspect of the world, namely,

‘the other’. In other words, the body becomes the means through which the world with all its activities is revealed. Furthermore, Sartre describes three ontological dimensions of the body. Firstly, the body is first and foremost ‘lived’ – here the German word *‘leibz’* applies, which means ‘a living body’ or ‘being alive’ and not *‘körperz’* which means ‘corps’ or ‘dead body’. Hence “I live my body”, which implies that the body is immersed in the world and makes the world an object that can be studied. Secondly, the body is ‘for others’. This dimension has a twofold meaning: on the one hand, the body grasps the other as an object; while on the other hand, the quantification of the body speaks of judgement or characterisation and focuses on differences between objects in the world. Lastly, the body promotes alienation from the ‘self’ when it encounters others. When the ‘other’ observes the body, he or she makes the flaws of the body explicit and therefore makes the self more conscious of its own subjectivities, which results in alienating the self from the body. The next section explains how the above account of the body relates to this study.

#### a) Perceptual space

Before I discuss the interconnection between the body and the world I first need to discuss the concept of space. Space can be explained from different perspectives such as physical space, geometrical space and perceived space. What this study seeks to explore is the significance of perceived space and the extent to which it relates to human consciousness. Perceived space is not only a feature of objects or subjects, but of both. Perceived space, Rabil (1967) points out, is existential space such as our environment, or the immediate space that surrounds us. Space is thus oriented towards the body and the body perceives space irrespective of the body being conscious or unconscious of its orientations. The first connection of the body with this space takes place unconsciously, that is, when a person is born. From that time onwards the body starts to make sense of the various orientations of space, such as depth, height, verticality, horizontality, length, breadth and so forth. This is an extremely complex phase of existence in space as we try to comprehend the perceptual field of space. As we become older and learn to understand the dimensions of space and anchor ourselves in this spatial world, our

understanding deepens and we learn to connect with all the objects in time and space. All of this is living space and we learn to experience the world through our bodies. We also learn that meaning is always present. For example, when we enter our homes, it triggers memories of happiness, joy or anxiety and tension, among other emotional responses. The next section expands on the body in space and explains the synthesis of meaning in space.

b) Being in the world and the ‘lived body theory’

To Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) the body is always acting and behaving in the world. The world then becomes the space that the body inhabits. In this space humans connect with other humans and objects. Because space has intelligibility and meaning – for example, emotions, fear, anxiety, calmness – it has according to Merleau-Ponty (p. 196) a direct bearing or impact on the body. He notes: “The experience of our body teaches us to embed space in time” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 196). Consequently the space (or environment) a person occupies has the potential to enter the body and affects the way a person feels. When this happens, the person becomes the space that he or she occupies. For example, if the atmosphere in a school is not conducive to learning, the possibility exists that teachers and children entering that space might feel the same way as other teachers and children feel, and subsequently behave in the same way by following them. This is congruent with Heidegger’s (1927/1967) view that people cannot stand distance. People are not eager to deviate from the norm. The reason is that the body becomes socialised into a dominant practice. This dominant practice, in Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962) view, can be described as the perceptual space that drives the person (teacher or learner) to becoming the space within which he or she is placed. This notion of space and its influence on the body has been corroborated by empirical studies conducted by Alerby (2009), Koopman (2017), Lilja (2013) and Finlay (2012).

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) emphasises how the body *inhabits* the world it is in. By so doing, the body as subject (that is, the living body) is intricately engaged in the world in the same way as objects like tables and chairs are immersed in it. Therefore the ‘lived body theory’ allowed me to determine how teachers inhabit

the school environment in which they found themselves. In addition, the ‘lived body theory’ highlights the significance of the relationship between teachers, learners, the curriculum and so forth on the teaching and learning process. It is important to note that every school has its own history (such as activities, learner performance in Grade 12, teachers’ attitude towards teaching and learning, and the values they instil in the children) that shaped the current state of affairs in these schools. This raises the question of how the history of the school impacts on the teacher’s disposition towards the teaching and learning of Accounting.

## **2.3 Phenomenology and the curriculum**

### **2.3.1 A brief history of phenomenology in curriculum studies**

In this section I will give an account of the history of phenomenology in curriculum studies by drawing on the scholarly work of William Pinar (2015b, pp. 237-244). In the same vein I will give a short overview of how the curriculum movement in the United States directly influenced curriculum design in South Africa. During the 1960s Dwayne Huebner introduced phenomenology to curriculum studies. Maxine Green, a colleague of Huebner’s at Columbia University, drew upon phenomenology, existentialism and imaginative literature in her important studies in the field of philosophy of education. A decade later Green’s work had a significant influence on a number of curriculum scholars, namely, Janet Miller, Madeleine Grumet and William Pinar. In 1974 David Denton wrote on phenomenological philosophers such as Chamerlin, Trountner, and Van den Berg. This philosophical tradition of the curriculum-as-lived was continued by Max van Manen and William Pinar during the early 1970s, although neither knew of the existence of the other until 1976. Pinar was introduced to phenomenology in 1967 whilst doing his undergraduate degree at Ohio State University. He studied phenomenology with his graduate students – particularly Madeleine Grumet – at the University of Rochester. By 1975 Pinar shifted his research interest from phenomenology to autobiography, although he used phenomenology as the foundational structure and adopted phenomenological concepts through which he introduced his autobiographical work. Van Manen, on the other hand, first studied phenomenology in his mother tongue (Dutch) and

subsequently introduced Ted Aoki to this field. Aoki and Van Manen advanced the study of phenomenology and later established the North American centre for phenomenological studies in education at the University of Alberta.

Pinar continues to elaborate on the history of phenomenology and the curriculum by highlighting the work of other scholars who emerged during the late 1970s and 1980s: William Reynolds – who studied under William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet at the University of Rochester; Margaret Hunsberger – who took phenomenology as a research method in education with Max van Manen; David Smith – who was introduced to phenomenology by Aoki, who was then working at the University of British Columbia (Pinar, 2015b, p. 239). These scholars made valuable contributions to the field of curriculum studies by drawing on a phenomenological philosophy. Although all these scholars made significant contributions to the field of curriculum studies, I will specifically draw from William Pinar's contribution to curriculum studies, because his work resonates well with the aims and objectives of this study, which is not only to describe the 'lived world' experiences of Accounting teachers, but also to gain new insights into understanding the curriculum through the minds and worldviews of Accounting teachers. In other words, how do teachers organize their thinking and planning around the content that steers their pedagogical thinking? Tann (1993) points out that each teacher has his or her own story, whether it pertains to curriculum, school environment, the community in which the school is located, the school management and support, and so forth. Each story refers to the teacher's personal identity, values, beliefs, understanding and assumptions. Tann (1993) refers to these aspects as a way of thinking about the teaching profession. As mentioned, the aim of this study is to understand the consciousness of Accounting teachers.

### 2.3.2 William Pinar's work on educational experience as lived

William Pinar is described by Carson (in Pinar, 2015a) as "one of the major curriculum theorists of the past forty years".

Pinar has made seven significant contributions to the field of curriculum studies (Pinar, 2015a, p. 1). This is because the philosophy behind Pinar's curriculum movement of the 1970s was to 'understand' the concept of curriculum rather than focusing on what Uhrmacher (1997) refers to as the shadows of the curriculum. That is, looking at the downside of the curriculum, such as, what the curriculum privileges or disdains as well as evaluation and implementation. Since Tyler's specific conceptualisation of the curriculum in the 1950s was abstract and difficult to make sense of because of his increasingly "sophisticated but reified language of systems theory, games theory, decision theory", Pinar set out to clarify the notion of a curriculum (Pinar and Irwin, 2005, pp. 90-91). The first contribution by Pinar in the 1970s was the introduction of the term *currere*. In the 1970s Pinar developed the concept of *currere*, which is the infinitive form of the noun curriculum and means 'to run'. '*Currere*' refers to a curriculum envisioned as "the educational experience of a complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2015a, p. 1) as opposed to the word 'curriculum' which implies syllabus (objectives or outcomes). This new concept (*currere*) created a shift in curriculum studies, that is, from a field that focused on curriculum development to one dedicated to understanding the very notion of a curriculum. *Currere* places the learner at the centre of the educational process and points out the complexity of the situation as each learner has unique educational needs, especially in the light of the diverse backgrounds with which learners enter the learning environment.

The move from *curriculum development to understanding curriculum* is Pinar's second contribution to the field of curriculum studies (p. 2). Understanding curriculum reflects or admonishes how teachers implement the curriculum which in turn invokes curriculum-as-lived. Seeing that one of the main aims of this study is to narrate the lived experiences of Accounting teachers, it will be interesting to unveil the direct experiences of teachers. Pinar later developed *queer theory* (third contribution), which eventually led to the reconfiguration of *anti-racist education* (fourth contribution) twenty years later (p. 2). Later he *reconceptualised the term curriculum* by demonstrating that curriculum development is an intellectual exercise rather than a bureaucratic one (fifth contribution). The introduction of the concept of *place* as a category in order to

understand curriculum was his sixth contribution (p. 2). Pinar's seventh contribution to the field of curriculum studies was the initiation of the *internationalization of curriculum studies*, which started in 2000. This undertaking led to the establishment of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (p. 2). Currently (2015) Pinar is being financially assisted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which enables him to study the intellectual histories and present circumstances around curriculum studies in Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa (p. 2).

For the purposes of this study, three of Pinar's conceptual contributions are particularly applicable, namely, the introduction of the terms *currere*, *understanding curriculum* (from the teacher's perspective) and *place*. I will discuss these three terms in more detail below.

a) The relevance of *currere* and *understanding the curriculum* for this study

Pinar's description of *currere* above refers to curriculum imagined as "the educational experience of a complicated conversation". This definition denotes that the curriculum is alive – that it is ongoing – and is not simply a finite set of outcomes or objectives. One of the aspects this study investigates is the way in which the Accounting teachers experience the curriculum. *Currere* and understanding curriculum are directly linked. This is because, while *currere* focuses on how the teachers in this study 'run' the [Accounting] course, their behaviour is rooted in their understanding of the curriculum as planned. Furthermore, *currere* with its strong focus on the individual and the fullness of his or her being, is derived at a point where race, culture, values, gender, class and so forth intersect. In the context of this study 'the individual' refers to the Accounting teacher, each with his or her own style of running the course based on his or her understanding of the curriculum. It is therefore fair to state that the way that teachers perceive the curriculum has a direct bearing on their practices and relation to the subject and subsequently to the learners that they teach.



In this study *currere* is investigated from three perspectives. The first is how Accounting teachers *run* the Accounting curriculum; are they merely acting as technicians (curriculum-as-planned) carrying out what policy-makers want them to do, or do they have their own theories about the curriculum that they implement (curriculum-as-lived). If the teachers implement a curriculum-as-lived, what personal aspects do they bring into the classroom? The second perspective on *currere* entails an investigation to gain an understanding of what goes on in the minds of the teachers. That is a question of teacher thinking and teacher doing, and how what they think and do in the classroom relates to a way of ‘being’ as opposed to ‘Being’ (that is, who they are). Here the aim is to relate teacher voice with teacher knowledge and thinking. The third perspective involves asking how teachers deal with challenges such as learner behaviour, results, the management styles of their principals and Heads of Departments.

b) The relevance of *place* for this study

Pinar’s contribution of the concept of place to this discourse is also important for this study. The context (place) within which the school is situated determines how the curriculum is interpreted and eventually implemented. The place in which the school is situated also brings with it its own challenges concerning the implementation of the curriculum. Eudora Welty (in Pinar, 2015a, p. 127) explains the relationship between place and feeling:

Feelings, are bound up in place. Knowing where one started allows one to understand where he or she is. This relationship between place and feeling is central to curriculum theory’s study of place.

Joe Kincheloe (in Pinar, 2015a) emphasises the importance of place by suggesting that the “imagination” is “unleashed” by “place”. He continues to say that “place is a window to the Lebenswelt, a vehicle to self-knowledge, and a crack in the structure that allows the archaeologist of self to discover the etymology of one’s research act” (p. 127). An essential point that Kincheloe (in Pinar, 2015a, p. 127-128) makes is that:

The appreciation of individual sensation can be the genesis of larger political awareness – the refusal to deny restlessness, discomfort, moral ambiguity, and the impulse to reject. As one struggles with the problematic nature of the lived world, he or she begins to sense the unity of self and situation.

Another key point Kincheloe (in Pinar, 2015a, p. 128) draws attention to is the primacy of history for every individual. He declares: “Place is place only if accompanied by a history” (ibid.). To extend the description of the concept of place Kincheloe avers that: “Place is the concept wherein the particularities of history, culture, and subjectivity become entwined” (ibid.).

In the next section I will differentiate between curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived as described by Ted Aoki.

### 2.3.3 Aoki’s views on curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived

Tetsuo Aoki (usually referred to as Ted Aoki) is undoubtedly the man who made the greatest impact on Canadian education and Canadian (but also North American) students in the area of curriculum studies and curriculum inquiry (Irwin, in Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. xx–xxi). Irwin refers to him as a “giant amongst us” (ibid., p. xx) and a “pedagogue of pedagogues” (ibid., p. xxi). Pinar, (ibid., p. 1) refers to Aoki as “a breathtakingly brilliant teacher and scholar”. Irwin notes that Aoki’s greatest gift was “his ability to call out of each of us deeply felt teaching and learning concerns that are transformed through penetrating inquiry” (ibid., p. xxi).

Ted Aoki was introduced to phenomenology in the early 1970s when he had to present a paper at a symposium with the theme “Phenomenological Description: Potential for Research in the Fine Arts” in Montreal, Canada (1991, p. 1). Aoki’s paper entitled “Toward Curriculum in a New Key” called upon scholars to open curriculum thought and action to extend beyond positivistic instrumentalism and to include European Continental scholarship. Two of the scholars he met at this symposium were Alfred Schutz (a noted phenomenologist) and Helmut Wagner (a disciple and colleague of Schutz). In 1978 he met up again with Max van Manen, who by this time was vigorously involved with Continental hermeneutic

phenomenology. Subsequently, Aoki and Van Manen promoted phenomenology as a practice and methodology in curriculum studies in Canada (Pinar, 2015b).

After hearing a radio report on CBS (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Aoki was alerted to some reasons why successful high school science students dropped out of the university science programme. The overarching reason for this was that they found the university out of touch with their own lives. Aoki referred to the curriculum that the students wished for as ‘curriculum-as-lived’ as opposed to the ‘curriculum-as-planned’, which refers to the content outlined in the syllabus. Curriculum-as-lived is experienced by students situationally. Aoki (1991, p. 6) therefore advocated for “decentering the modernist view of education and to open the way to include alternative meanings, including lived meanings, legitimated by everyday narrative – the stories and narratives in and by which we live daily” (Aoki, 1999, p. 180). Aoki was a campaigner for curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived to dwell simultaneously in the process of teaching and learning (1999, p. 180). He believed that both the experiences of teachers and learners are vital for effective (or authentic) learning to occur. As Magrini (2015, p. 274) puts it:

Aoki’s practice of phenomenology reveals an understanding of an attuned mode of human transcendence in learning, which opens the possibility for an authentic educational experience where educators and students dwell in the midst of the curriculum’s unfolding as an ontological phenomenon.

Aoki identified three layers where teaching occurs: (i) the outermost layer: understanding teaching as a black box; (ii) the middle layer: understanding teaching theoretically and scientifically; and (iii) the innermost layer: understanding teaching techniques, strategies and skills (Aoki, in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015).

Aoki illustrates what he means by ‘teaching as a black box’ by referring to the way in which researchers approached their research in education and/or teaching (ibid., p. 18). He comments that these researchers are primarily concerned with the outcomes of teaching rather than in understanding teaching itself (ibid.). In such research the lived worlds of teachers and students are purposefully ignored,

therefore it “denies the humanness that lies at the core of what education is” (ibid.).

Researchers from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology have approached the question of what teaching is from their respective perspectives. Psychologists, for example, are prompted toward understanding teaching behaviour, sociologists toward understanding the roles of teachers, and anthropologists are driven to undertake research in order to understand teaching as a human activity. Aoki asserts that they have “imposed upon the lived situations of teachers and students abstract, preset categories of their disciplines” (Aoki, in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015 p. 19). Although this type of research provides insight into the behaviour, roles and activities of teachers, the very concrete worlds of teachers and students are ignored.

‘The innermost layer: Understanding teaching techniques, strategies and skills’ is associated with phrases like ‘teaching competence’ and ‘effective teaching’ (Aoki, in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 19). Aoki declares that words such as ‘competence’ and ‘effectiveness’ suggest a link to the words ‘technique’ and ‘skill’, which reduces teaching to a technical activity (ibid.).

In his quest to discover the essence of teaching, Aoki suggests that instead of asking ‘What is *teaching*?’ we should ask ‘What *is* teaching?’ (in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 21). In other words, instead of referring to the technicalities or procedures of teaching (with the question: What is *teaching*?), one should rather concentrate on answering the question Van Manen (1990, p. 42) asks: What is it about teaching that makes it possible for it to be what it is in its essence (is-ness)? With this new question Aoki feels that he is “in the presence of the beingness of teaching” (in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 21). He points out that for him to be in the presence of the beingness of teaching will allow him to “hear better the voice of what teaching essentially is” (ibid.). He concludes that if one looks at teaching from this perspective, it can be described as a place “where care dwells, a place of in-gathering and belonging, where the in-dwelling of teachers and students is made possible by the presence of care that each has for the other” (ibid.).

This study does not aim to establish the outcomes of teaching, nor does it aim to determine and/or analyse the Accounting teachers' behaviour in the classroom, nor does it aim to explore the activities involved in teaching Accounting, or how skilful the Accounting teacher is at teaching Accounting. Instead this study resonates with Aoki's question on the 'is-ness of teaching', which is to investigate the lived experiences of the (selected) Accounting teachers. In other words, the aim is to understand the world in which Accounting teachers live and work (their concrete world) and how their lived world influences who they are (their 'being-ness') and how they teach. This study sets out to explore the lived world of each research participant in order to gain an insight into its influence on them as human beings and as professionals (that is, how their experiences within their *lived space* influences their *Dasein*).

## **2.4 Lived experience**

### **2.4.1 The nature of lived experience**

A lived experience does not confront me as something perceived or represented; it is not given to me, but the reality of lived experience is there-for-me because I have a reflexive awareness of it, because I possess it immediately as belonging to me in some sense. Only in thought does it become objective (Dilthey, 1985, p. 223).

Max van Manen (1990, p. 35) interprets William Dilthey's description above of lived experience as being "our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life – a reflexive or self-given awareness which is, as awareness, unaware of itself". Van Manen stresses that lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research (1990, p. 36). He continues that "the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence ..." (ibid.). He refers to this reflection upon lived experience as having a "certain essence, a 'quality' that we recognise in retrospect" (ibid.). He clarifies this by stating that lived experience is something that happened in the past and adds that "it can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only reflectively as past presence" (ibid.). With regards to this study, as the research

participants reflect upon their lived experience, they realise that it has a special meaning for them.

One's lived experiences consist of various parts that make up a complete whole; for example, they can be compared to the different acts in a play, or as Dilthey puts it: "Lived experiences are related to each other like motifs in the andante of a symphony" (1985, p. 227). Furthermore, Dilthey mentions that "Just as our body needs to breathe, our soul requires the fulfilment and expansion of its existence in the reverberations of emotional life (1985, p. 59). Van Manen interprets Dilthey's account of lived experience as: "Lived experience is to the soul what breath is to the body" (1990, p. 36).

In qualitative studies the main focus of research is on human experiences, but the concept of 'lived experience' (*Erlebnis*) has a special meaning in a methodological framework. Husserl (1970) and Merleau-Ponty (1962/2005), amongst other contemporary proponents, declared that the notion of 'lived experience' intends to explore directly the consciousness and actions of human existence. The English word 'experience' does not include the word 'lived' – it is simply derived from the Latin word 'experientia', which means 'trial, proof, experiment, experience'. However, the German word '*erlebnis*' – which already includes the word 'to live' or 'life' – literally means 'living through something'. Husserl (1970) proclaims that "All knowledge *begins in experience* but it does not *arise from experience*" (p. 109).

Phenomenology uses an experienced-oriented methodology (Husserl, 1967). Stated differently, the phenomenological method is the descriptive analysis of experience (Husserl, 1967). In other words, phenomenology uses lived experience to analyse an individual by delving into his or her consciousness. This study reports on the lived experiences of Accounting teachers in an attempt to understand their lived world. In effect this study aims to analyse **who** the research participant is and what motivates him or her to continue to teach – more specifically, to continue to teach Accounting.

In phenomenology the emphasis is on ‘returning to the things themselves’ (*zu den Sachen selbst*), that is, examining the meaningful ways in which a phenomenon is experienced, interpreted and performed in one’s everyday life. Berglund explains this by stating that “a thing in the phenomenological sense does not exist primarily in and of itself, but rather in the meaning that individuals attach to it” (n.d., p. 76). This would suggest that each phenomenon experienced by an individual is meaningful to him or her. Berglund therefore agrees with Merleau-Ponty’s sentiment that “we are condemned to meaning” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). In other words, Merleau-Ponty emphasises that it is the meanings things have for an individual, and not the things in themselves, that are significant. The focus of investigating the lived experiences of an individual is therefore the meanings things have for that individual (and affects his or her thoughts and behaviour) and not the things in themselves. This study attempts to explore the meaning of certain phenomena (things, experiences) for the consciousness of the (selected) Accounting teachers – that which affects the Accounting teachers’ thoughts and behaviour – by delving into their past (personal) experiences and present (work-related) experiences.

#### 2.4.2 A review of studies on lived experience

Many studies have been conducted on the lived experiences of participants. For example, Bloom and Erlandson’s (2003) study on African American women principals in urban schools endeavoured to sketch the world of these women as a struggle for unbiased acknowledgement in the field of education. The study used narrative storytelling to provide portraits of their leadership behaviours within an urban school context to elucidate and depict the lived experiences of three African American women. Although this study explores the lived experience of these three women principals, the authors did not employ phenomenology as a theory, but instead they used standpoint theory. Nor did the authors did use phenomenology as a means to construct or explicate data, but chose to employ naturalistic inquiry as a methodological design for their study.

An interesting study of lived experiences of Hindu teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of evolution in Life Sciences in the FET Band was

conducted by Reddy (2012). Although she did not use phenomenology as a philosophy (theory), she included elements of phenomenology in the empirical section (research design).

A study conducted by Wangui (2012) on the lived experiences of female head teachers in rural primary schools in Kenya explored the educational leadership experiences of women working in schools in the rural areas within Kajiado County.

Recently there has been an upsurge in phenomenological research in South Africa, with a strong focus on the disposition of teachers towards the curriculum. For example, a doctoral study that employed a phenomenological approach to investigate Physical Science teachers' experiences in implementing a new curriculum was conducted by Koopman (2013). In his study Koopman (2013) engaged with phenomenology both as a theory and applied it as a means to construct and explicate the data. Another doctoral study on the lived experiences of teachers working within an environment of cultural performativity at a primary school in the Western Cape Province, South Africa was conducted by Van Wyk (2015). In his doctoral work Van Wyk (2015) employed phenomenology empirically (as a methodological approach), but did not draw on phenomenology philosophically (as a theory).

Although the literature surveyed produced further interesting studies on lived experiences (amongst others, De Gagne and Walters, 2010; Lindseth and Norberg, 2004; Knowles, Nieuwenhuis and Smit, 2009) it does not indicate any studies on the *lived world of Accounting teachers* in South Africa.

## **2.5 Studies on Accounting curriculum and Accounting teachers**

There is a rich repository of studies on Accounting as a subject, but to my knowledge there are none on (specifically) the lived experiences of Accounting teachers as a whole. In this section I will briefly describe some of the studies I have come across in the literature on Accounting. The first section will highlight some international studies on Accounting education, and the second section will cover national studies conducted on Accounting education.



McPhail, Paisey and Paisey (2010) investigated the links between class, deprivation and subject choice in the field of business studies, including Accounting and Economics in Scottish high schools. They concluded that there is definitely a discrepancy between children from wealthier parents and those from financially deprived parents and the subjects taken at school. In Scotland more learners at a deprived school take Administration and Business Management because these subjects are considered less demanding than Accounting. McPhail, Paisey and Paisey (2010) ask the question whether the accounting profession has not disregarded the way in which the subject is introduced within the school curriculum. The authors assert that critical Accounting academics are neglecting to probe the construction of Accounting and the broader notions of accountability in schools. Important to the authors is that further research into and engagement with Accounting in schools and the policy agendas that are driving subject choices of learners as well as curriculum content are needed.

In a paper written by Graham (2013) he argues that students should not only understand the calculative grammar of Accounting, but also the structural conditions under which Accounting narratives are written. Understanding Accounting as a language will position them to be informed, critical readers of those narratives and not merely “passive consumers of Accounting signs” (Graham, 2013, p. 120).

A study conducted by Geoffrey Lamberton (2014) on Accounting and happiness set out to challenge the dominant view that the main aim of business is profit, with the observation that profit is a means to a much higher goal, namely happiness. By interpreting this goal as ‘eudaimonic happiness’, or what the Buddhists refer to as nirvana, the author explored the capability of Accounting to contribute to this intrinsically spiritual goal. Sometimes educators of Accounting think that their subject is elevated above others in that it can contribute towards happiness because of the link between Accounting, efficient financial management and wealth creation (Graham, 2013, p. 13). Lamberton (2014) concluded that studying Accounting does not necessarily lead to eventual happiness.

In a paper on critical Accounting education, Boyce (2004) advocates for a more lateral approach in contrast to a technicist approach in teaching Accounting. He suggests that in order to make Accounting relevant to its socio-historical context – more specifically, relevant to the lived experience of students – Accounting educators need to adopt an ‘outside the circle’ approach to teaching and learning (Boyce, 2004, p. 565). He outlines a case for broadening the Accounting education curriculum by adopting an approach he refers to as ‘tangential thinking’ (p. 565).

Internationally there is a rich repository of studies on Accounting, but nationally there is a paucity of such studies – especially phenomenological studies on Accounting teachers and none that specifically investigates the lived experiences of Accounting teachers as a whole. The literature surveyed revealed a Master’s study and a doctoral study on Accounting that are relevant to this study. Both these studies were conducted by Glynis Schreuder, who is a Senior Curriculum Planner: Accounting for the WCED. Her Master’s thesis (2009) reports on the situation regarding EMS (Economic and Management Sciences) in South Africa. The study was conducted in the Western Cape Province and explores how EMS (done in Grades 7, 8 and 9) prepares learners for Accounting in Grade 10. Schreuder (2009) revealed that many of the EMS teachers are under-qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the subject; hence the FET Accounting teacher often first has to cover the Accounting aspects of the Grade 9 EMS curriculum before starting the Grade 10 content. In Schreuder’s (2014) doctoral phenomenological study she examined the teaching of Accounting in schools in the Western Cape Province in terms of the concept of quality. The aim of her study was “to understand what professional development programmes Accounting teachers are engaging with and what the effect is of such initiatives” (Schreuder, 2014). She concludes that “continued professional development activities as a means of transforming teaching practices ultimately improve learner performance”. Although Schreuder’s 2014 study was a phenomenological study, its focus was not on the experiences of the Accounting teachers’ lived world *as a whole*.

## 2.6 Curriculum in South Africa

### 2.6.1 Curriculum change in South Africa and how teachers work

The implementation of several national curricula in South Africa over the past two decades has changed the educational landscape drastically, resulting in, among other things, the exodus of many teachers. The literature points towards many factors accounting for the exodus of teachers such as work-related stress, low morale, ethical considerations and government reform strategies (Matoti, 2010; Evans, 2000). The new changes to the curriculum were not well received by most teachers (Jansen, 1999; Matoti, 2010). Jansen (1999) and Matoti (2010) further contend that the main reasons for teachers leaving the profession were that they were left on the periphery by policy-makers and various other stakeholders when change was institutionalized. Some empirical studies conducted by Matoti (2010, p. 569) and Jansen (1999) as well as by Jansen and Taylor (2003) have found that despite teachers' vociferous denouncement of the evils of the apartheid curriculum, most teachers still professed allegiance to the apartheid curriculum because of their resistance to change and reluctance to adopt new curricula. The possibility exists that some Accounting teachers also left the teaching profession for the same reasons.

The added stress of the implementation of a new curriculum, namely the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and recent modification of the NCS to form the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), has further exacerbated the situation for some teachers. Evidence of the stress associated with the implementation of a new curriculum was revealed in numerous personal discussions that I had with principals and curriculum advisors in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town in 2013. One principal lamented how difficult it is for Accounting to survive and how the workload has increased for the remaining Accounting teachers. An Education Specialist (previously known as a Curriculum Advisor) pointed out that in some schools one Accounting teacher could be teaching all the grades. Although some teachers may leave the profession for the reasons mentioned, others choose to remain in the teaching profession and address the challenges. Or others simply live with these challenges.

In an attempt to overcome the curricular divisions of the past and realise the aims of the Constitution (as listed further down in this section), the South African Department of Education introduced outcomes-based education in 1997. However, as a result of the challenges in its implementation, a review was prompted in 2000. In 2002 this review resulted in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grades R to 9 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades 10 to 12 (DBE, 2011). Challenges in the implementation of the RNCS persisted and in 2009 a Ministerial Task Team was appointed by the then newly appointed Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, to re-examine the implementation of the NCS from Grades R right up to Grade 12. The aim of this review was to identify the complications in the curriculum that hampered effective teaching and learning. The outcome of this review process led to a modification of the NCS, namely CAPS. This new version of the NCS replaced the documents used in the NCS, namely, the Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines, and Subject Assessment Guidelines with (i) the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) – for all approved subjects listed in the document; (ii) the national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the NCS Grades R to 12; and (iii) the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011).

In her Foreword in the National Curriculum Statement – CAPS for Accounting, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, refers to the Preamble to the South African Constitution by emphasising that the aims of the Constitution are to:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations (DBE, 2011).

She further declares that education and the curriculum have a vital role to play in achieving these aims of the Constitution (DBE, 2011).

The CAPS was introduced in phases: Grades R to 3 and Grade 10 in 2012; Grades 4 to 6 and Grade 11 in 2013; and Grades 7 to 9 and Grade 12 in 2014. In effect this means that by 2014 *all* learners throughout the GET and FET Bands were following the CAPS and in that same year *all* learners wrote the Grade 12 external examination based on the CAPS.

#### 2.6.2 General aims of the South African Curriculum

According to the DBE (2011, p. 4), the general aims of the latest South African curriculum for Grades R to Grade 12 are (i) to ensure that learners acquire appropriate and worthwhile values, apply knowledge and skills that are meaningful to their own lives by promoting knowledge in local contexts while being sensitive to global imperatives; (ii) to prepare learners for higher education and/or the workplace; (iii) to apply seven principles, namely social transformation; active and critical learning; high knowledge and high skills; progression; human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice; valuing indigenous knowledge systems; and credibility, quality and efficiency; (iv) to produce learners that are able to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking; work individually as well as in a team; organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively; collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information; communicate effectively; use science and technology effectively; demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems; and (v) to provide inclusive education.

Given the seriousness of these objectives listed above, which are enshrined in the Constitution and espoused in CAPS for all schools in South Africa, three questions arise, namely (i) Who are the teachers who must bring about this change? (ii) How do they approach the curriculum with these objectives in mind? (iii) What are the modes of instruction that will be most fruitful and plausible to achieve these aims? The teachers (including the Accounting teachers) then become the exemplars of this intervention by government. Therefore the question

of *who* the teacher is and the duties assigned to him or her to embrace the learner in the new South Africa becomes paramount. The role of the teacher then is not only to deliver the content to learners, or to instil a way of thinking, but it also becomes a way of being. The role of the teacher becomes a form of consciousness to realise these broad visions for the country. Therefore, it becomes increasingly more important to unpack *who* the teacher is (that is, to determine his or her inner landscape) with respect to the work and culture that has to be understood beyond the supremacy of the curriculum and the various interpretations of it.

### 2.6.3 Accounting in South Africa

Before 1994 the South African education system consisted of eighteen different education departments that catered for all the provinces, homelands and population groups (Morar, 2006, p. 250). A different Senior Certificate examination was written by each department. During this time Accounting was taught on two levels, namely Higher Grade and Standard Grade, in Grades 10 to 12. Learners who had the aptitude for the subject and who wished to continue their studies in Accounting at a tertiary institution would do the subject on the Higher Grade. Others who did not have the required aptitude and who most probably had no plans to pursue their studies in Accounting at tertiary level would do the subject on the Standard Grade.

The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provided a basis for the transformation of the curricula in South Africa (DoE, 2003, p. 1). Later, with the introduction of Curriculum 2005, as well as the RNCS for Grades R to 9 in 2005, a new learning area (subject) was introduced, that is, Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). EMS consisted of Business Economics, and Economic principles as well as a section on financial literacy (Accounting aspects). In Grades 8 and 9 learners were introduced only to basic Accounting principles. In Grades 10 to 12 (FET Band) learners could choose to do Accounting as one of their seven subjects. By this stage the option of taking any subject on the Higher Grade or Standard Grade no longer existed. All learners did the subject (in actual fact, all subjects) on *one* level.

The CAPS describes Accounting as a subject that focuses on the financial accounting, managerial accounting and auditing fields (DBE, 2011, p. 8). In other words, Accounting as a school subject concentrates on measuring performance, processing and communicating financial information. Table 2.1 indicates the three main topics and corresponding topics in the Accounting curriculum for Grades 10 to 12.

**Table 2.1:** Main and corresponding topics in the FET Accounting curriculum

Weighting of curriculum	Topic
<i>Financial Accounting</i> (weighting 50% to 60%)	1. Accounting concepts
	2. GAAP principles
	3. Bookkeeping
	4. Accounting Equation
	5. Final accounts and financial statements
	6. Salaries and wages
	7. Value-Added Tax
	8. Reconciliations
<i>Management Accounting</i> (weighting 20% to 25%)	9. Cost Accounting
	10. Budgeting
<i>Managing Resources</i> (weighting 20% to 25%)	11. Indigenous bookkeeping systems
	12. Fixed assets
	13. Inventory
	14. Ethics
	15. Internal control

(Source: DBE, 2011, p. 8)

Table 2.2 illustrates the purpose of Accounting with regards to what learners should be able to do.

**Table 2.2:** Purpose of Accounting – what learners should be able to do

(i)	Record, analyse and interpret financial and other relevant data in order to make informed decisions
(ii)	Present and/or communicate financial information effectively by using generally accepted accounting practice in line with current developments and legislation
(iii)	Develop and demonstrate an understanding of fundamental Accounting concepts
(iv)	Relate skills, knowledge and values to real-world situations in order to ensure the balance between theory and practice, to enter the world of work and/or to move to higher education, and to encourage self-development
(v)	Organise and manage own finances and activities responsibly and effectively
(vi)	Apply principles to solve problems in a judicious and systematic manner in familiar and unfamiliar situations, thus developing the ability to identify and solve problems in the context of the various fields of Accounting
(vii)	Develop critical, logical and analytical abilities and thought processes to enable learners to apply skills to current and new situations
(viii)	Develop ethical behaviour, sound judgement, thoroughness, orderliness, accuracy and neatness
(ix)	Deal confidently with the demands of an Accounting occupation manually and/or electronically

(Source: DBE, 2011, pp. 8-9).



The CAPS for Accounting is very prescriptive, time-bound and assessment-driven, giving the Accounting teacher very little freedom to stimulate critical thinking in the classroom. As a result teachers are forced by policy to adhere to the prescribed content to prepare learners adequately for the final examination. The widespread changes in the educational landscape with specific reference to implementing the CAPS for Accounting motivated this study to investigate the lived experiences of Accounting teachers. The study might shed some light on how these changes in the curriculum have and are affecting Accounting teachers and the subject in general.

## 2.7 Data explication framework

The main aim of this study is to investigate the lived experiences of five Accounting teachers. To answer the main research question as accurately as possible, three sources have been particularly important in the development of the scientific phase of the explication process. The first is Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory'. The term "lifeworld" is also referred to as a person's "pre-given world", "prescientific world", "pretheoretical world", "lived world", "*a priori* state of awareness" or his or her "surrounding world" (p. 50). The theory of the *lifeworld* is explicated by Husserl (1970) as "the world constantly given to us as actual in our concrete world life" (p. 51). He views this theory of the *lifeworld* as the totality of everything intermundane that shapes a person's perception of life and which is often viewed as the original object-giving experience. In this study the explication process focused strongly on all components of the participants' world (experiences) as Accounting teachers.

The second source is Heidegger's (1927/1967) ontological notion of '*Dasein*', referred to as "being there" or "there being". This provided me with a picture of who the participants 'are'. Heidegger (1927/1967) avers that it is only through experience as divulged through stories that being can be articulated. He wrote:

Thus to work out the question of Being adequately, we must take an entity – the inquirer – transparent in his own Being... This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term *Dasein* (ibid., p. 27).

In the light of this quotation, it is only through an analysis of human existence within the constraints of specified cultural, social, political and economic conditions that we arrive at an understanding of the *being* (participants) of being. *Dasein*, as explained in Chapter Two, means “being” (*sein*) and “there” (*da*). The analysis of *Dasein*, as in translations of Heidegger, designates the realm of lumination which is the fundamental characteristic of human experience. This mode of being specifically relates to the “existence” of human beings in the world – or to put it differently, as the being-in-the-world or the being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. This is what forms the thrust of *Dasein* within the scientific representation of the data explication process. Essentially, human beings find themselves in the world and as a result of their orientation to the world, every manifestation of ‘being’ human is related to the world. Man is neither inert matter nor pure interiority, which make them open to the world. Human subjectivity is not locked in “I”, but manifested as ‘being with’ and ‘being-open’ to the world. Therefore people and their world cannot be separated in the data explication process, but need to be represented as engaged in interconnected dialogue.

The third important source is Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962) “lived body theory”. To Merleau-Ponty (ibid.) time plays a fundamental role in our existence in space, which he describes as ‘a positing act of synthesis’. In a time-spanning, sense-creating act, a person’s existent synthesis formulates perceptual data that are shaped by past experiences, which in turn leads to anticipatory interpretive behavioural projections. In this way most of a person’s perception or description of the world is synthesized into propositions that form his or her world of significance, which he called “a source of significance (*sens*)” (ibid., p. 254). This so-called ‘source of significance’ is possessed by an individual within a specific time-span and therefore consciously possessed within a certain space. For example, in most cases teachers are influenced by pre-given circumstances, such as learner behaviour, attitudes of colleagues, management styles, the community in which the school is situated, resources and so forth that change with time. In other words, a teacher’s *Erfahrung* is not only a matter between the

senses and the intellect, which forms the perceived data, but is also subjected to a synthesizing imaging that is space-time dependent. This space-time spanning brings into being a truly temporal world.

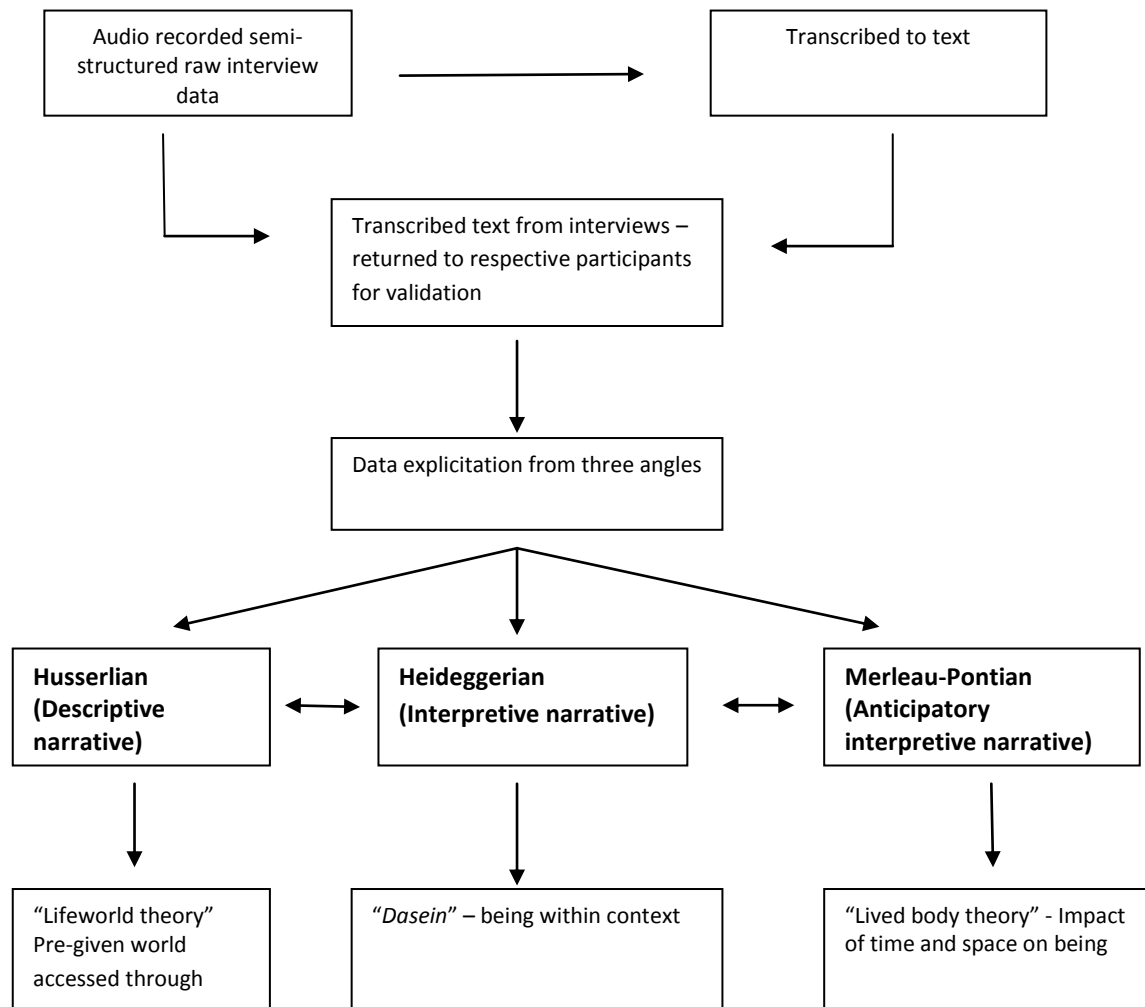
Existence to Merleau-Ponty is therefore subjected to the body in time and space. This is articulated by Thomas Langan (1966) as follows:

Our bodies are part of the world, are aspects of being itself through which a consciousness is made possible. And while the reflective space which is thus opened within Being may tend to consider itself apart as though this point of consciousness were somehow source of all that is, or at least absolute creator of its sense; and although it hides the “brute Being” under accumulated layers of the sedimented results of its organising dialogues with *l'être*, we must, and can, learn to seek out the fundamental, *Urpräsentierbar*, the nature that still shows through gaps in the culture that has been woven from its parts (p. 15).

In this study Merleau-Ponty's ‘lived body theory’ helped me to examine the data for the peculiar mode of corporal being-in-the-world of each research participant. This allowed me to focus on the research participants' essential connectedness to the historicity of the school environment in which they teach and their openness to transcend the history that shapes their dominant behaviour.

Although all these theories discussed above fall within the ambit of a phenomenological philosophical inquiry, its methodical data explication process was implemented as illustrated in Figure 1 (the data explication process).

The first phase of the data-construction process involved two audio-recorded face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. During each interview I attempted to capture as much detail about the response to each question by probing as fully as possible into their lived world until rich descriptions were elicited. To do so, I had to remain open to each participant's story to uncover what it means ‘to be’ an Accounting teacher as divulged in the interview.

**Figure 2.1:** Data explication process

Field notes were taken during the interview and the morning after as I reflected on the interview process and the responses of the participants. According to Crist and Tanner (2003), field notes record all the events that I observed during the interview which include, amongst others, facial expressions, body language, length of pauses between responses, and all other non-verbal cues. Some of these gestures and events were recorded in the interview room and all others as I was reflecting on the interview the following morning. These field notes were kept separate in a file and supplemented with a more robust engagement with the data to draw on and explain new insights in understanding the lived world of the respondents. After each interview I was assisted by a phenomenologist for further guidance on how to conduct the subsequent interview without contaminating the

data. This aided me in making sure that I remained true to the phenomenological circle of data construction in which I bracketed the self and allowed the information to flow freely from each participant. After all the interviews were recorded to my satisfaction, I approached a professional transcriber to convert each audio-recorded interview (spoken language) to text verbatim. Upon receiving the transcribed text, I returned each transcription to the research participant for verification of the authenticity of the transcription to ensure that what was in the transcript was an accurate reflection of what was said. In addition, I requested clarification from each participant if I did not understand certain phrases and emotive words. After the transcribed interviews were validated, the data explication process started.

To explicate the work of the respective theorists, I drew on hermeneutical phenomenological philosophical inquiry for deeper insight into the lived world of each participant. According to Vandermause and Flemming (2011, p. 368), the term hermeneutics has its origin in the verb '*hermeneuein*' (to interpret) and the noun '*hermeneia*' (interpretation). It was first used in the Middle Ages to refer to the interpretation of biblical texts, referred to as '*biblical exegesis*' to make the text comprehensible to the public. Hermeneutics became part of the phenomenological tradition as a philosophy when continental philosophers, such as Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Giorgio, applied it in their writing to allow the essence of experience to be extended to contemporary subjects (Polkington, 2004). In this study hermeneutics was applied to shed light on the common everyday experience of the teachers and how/what they think as a means of understanding their lived world. In hermeneutics the interpretation starts as the stories of each participant are elicited. Hermeneutics allowed me delve not only into what was said, but also into what was hidden. For example, I could zoom in on emotions, feelings, what they were thinking and so forth. Thus the framing of the data explication process was used to generate narratives that emerged from the transcripts and field notes. In Chapter Three, I discuss how the transcript analysis took place.

## 2.8 Summary

The first section of this chapter explained the field of phenomenology and its philosophical significance for this study. Edmund Husserl's theory of *lived experience (lebenswelt)*, Martin Heidegger's ontological notion of *being* or *Dasein*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *lived body* theory, and the work of various other phenomenologists that relate to this study were explicated. The second section examined William Pinar's work on curriculum and phenomenology, as well as Ted Aoki's views on curriculum-as-lived and curriculum-as-planned. The third section described the nature of lived experience, as well as studies that have been conducted on lived experience, Accounting teachers and the Accounting curriculum, curriculum change in South Africa, and the effect of the changes in the curriculum on the way that teachers work. Finally, the last section of this chapter describes the data explication framework employed.

The next chapter will discuss all the methodological orientations related to this study, for example, methodological framework, sampling, data-construction methods, data explication framework explaining how the transcript was analysed, ethical issues, and the trustworthiness of the data.

## ***CHAPTER THREE***

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research  
(Van Manen, 1990, p. 36)

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I firstly narrate my introduction to the field of phenomenology – becoming familiar with and inspired by the “textual genre which carries the immediacy and ‘livedness’ of people’s experiences” (Willis, 2002, p. 3). This is followed by an explanation and substantiation of the choice of research methodology, emphasising the differences between quantitative/positivist and phenomenological research methodologies. Thirdly, the research method (describing how the sample was constituted, the research instruments employed, and the data explication process) is explained. This is followed by a discussion of the pertinent ethical issues and the question of trustworthiness in phenomenological research. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing a brief summary of the central themes discussed.

#### **3.2 My journey in understanding and valuing phenomenology as a research methodology**

Throughout numerous informal conversations with Accounting teachers and Accounting Senior Education Specialists, I was troubled by the plethora of concerns and challenges that hinder the effective teaching of the subject. For example, teachers expressed their views on how they are struggling with learners who enter the FET phase in Grade 10 despite inadequate content knowledge, while Senior Education Specialists bemoaned the state of affairs in most schools and pointed out how inadequately teachers present certain aspects of the Accounting curriculum. What I observed from the concerns of the teachers and Senior Education Specialists was the absence of what Aoki alludes to as an attitude of “watchfulness” (in Pinar & Irwin, 2005, p. 195). What was missing from the conversations with these teachers and education specialists was a caring spirit. These conversations inspired me to undertake an investigation into the lived experience of Accounting teachers in the Western Cape province. Teachers

often tacitly describe their understanding of teaching and learning based on their perceptions of their surroundings. As Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) claims, we become the space or environment that surrounds us. On the basis of this premise, I became interested in unpacking what motivated these Accounting teachers to do their work (or not). I wanted to delve into their subconscious minds to explore their inner landscapes, to understand how they experience being Accounting teachers. To understand how these teachers experience being Accounting teachers, will help us to listen with care and understanding to the ‘watchful’ eyes of our teachers. At the time I did not know that I was actually pursuing a phenomenological investigation. My first encounter with phenomenology as a methodology for research in education was when I read a dissertation on the lived experiences of Physical Science teachers in implementing a new curriculum. I was fascinated by the eloquence, depth and detailed language of the phenomenological study. I felt as if a new world had opened up for me and I could relate to the students of Heidegger who described his work as “nothing short of electrifying” (Kruger-Ross, 2015, p. 1). When Heidegger first encountered phenomenology, as a student of the generally accepted father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, it inspired him to take Husserl’s work further. In retrospect, that was how I felt when I first encountered phenomenology. Koopman (2015, p. 2) writes that he felt like “a bird released from the cage of positivistic thinking”, while Pinar and Reynolds (2015, p. 2) describe their first experience as “being found”. These authors paved the way for my journey, which led me to my own enquiry into this scarcely used methodology, especially in the field of education in South Africa.

Each phenomenological study that I read made me thirstier for more knowledge about the field than before. I wanted to read more and more but could never quench my thirst. As I was reading Husserl’s (1983) book *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology* and Heidegger’s (1927/1967) abstract and complicated *Being and Time*, I became more confused and scared, and at times I felt stupid because of the depth and complexity of their thoughts. These are the canonical authors in the field and even today, many decades later, their work still remains relevant and appropriate to our understanding of what it means to be human. It



was Van Manen (1990) who helped me to clear the mist that had clouded my understanding of phenomenology. His work taught me that when one uses phenomenology as a methodology, lived experience is the point of departure. And so my journey through the forest of phenomenology began – as I struggled at first with the language, but its poetic feel spurred me on to continue reading. It was (and still is) a completely new language compared to the typical language used in other research methodologies. Similarly to Pinar and Reynolds (2015), I began to understand a bit better why I am who I am. Regardless of how complex the field of phenomenology seemed at the start of my research, I was convinced that employing it as a research methodology in my own study was the appropriate choice. I wanted to hear the different voices of the Accounting teachers being interviewed, as Aoki so cogently puts it:

In our busy world of education, we are surrounded by layers of voices, some loud, some shrill, that claim to know what teaching is. Awed, perhaps, by the cacophony of voices, certain voices became silent and, hesitating to reveal themselves, conceal themselves. Let us beckon these voices to speak to us, particularly the silent ones, so that we may awaken to the truer sense of teaching that likely stirs within each of us (in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 17-18).

I embarked on this study to investigate the lived experiences of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape province. In order to examine the lived experiences of Accounting teachers I needed to explore how these Accounting teachers experience the circumstances (context) within which they teach, how the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decades impact on their disposition towards the curriculum, how their convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which they experience their work, and what motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do.

A discussion on the research methodology and research method, which will clarify the applicability of the approach and method I employed follows below.

### 3.3 Research Methodology

#### 3.3.1 Method and Methodology

As I engaged with the literature on method and methodology, I discovered that there is an explicit difference between these concepts. Gelo (2012, p. 111) defines method as the “*what and how of empirical research*”. The *what* and *how* can be regarded as the technical aspects and includes sampling, the research instruments used to collect the raw data and the analysis of the data. A research method requires a set of principles or a worldview (that is, a methodology) in order to drive their application. These philosophical foundations constitute a scientific paradigm (pp. 110-111). A scientific paradigm is characterised by Gelo as “a set of interrelated basic values, assumptions and beliefs regarding what science should be and how we should carry it out” (p. 111).

In other words, according to the above classification a research method is concerned with the technical aspects, for example, sampling, the research instruments used to collect the raw data, and data analysis, whereas a research methodology “specifies the rules and formal conditions for scientific investigation, with specific reference to its aims, logic of inquiry, quality criteria and, finally, research methods” (p. 111). A research method is therefore part of (or a sub-section of) a research methodology.

The above section focused on the difference between method and methodology, while the next section distinguishes between quantitative/positivist and phenomenological research methodologies.

#### 3.3.2 Quantitative/Positivist versus phenomenological methodologies

The epistemological foundation of phenomenology as a methodology is more concerned with answering the main research question: What are the lived experiences of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province? By implication one of the aims of a phenomenological methodological framework is to understand human consciousness. In this study ‘consciousness’ refers to understanding the lived world of each Accounting teacher. To this end, its

objective is fourfold, which is to exemplify the compositional plane of each research participant's (i) intentionality (that is, the object of one's consciousness or the unity of consciousness), (ii) primacy of their lived world, (iii) pre-suppositionless description of their lived world, and (iv) meaning in their roles as Accounting teachers (Schweitzer, 1983). This search for understanding 'the lived world' of people makes the epistemological foundation of phenomenology different from that of quantitative or positivist research. The difference lies in (i) the approach of the researcher in the field, and (ii) his or her methods of data construction. The positivist paradigm is characterized by "dualisms, material determinism and reductionism and the assumption of an objective world that is independent of the research subject" (Schweitzer, 1983, p. 153). From this perspective the positivist conceives the material world essentially as a pre-constituted field of objects or pure facts that awaits analysis. Schweitzer (1983) asserts that one implication of the positivist approach is the assumption that the epistemological validity of the data is independent of the process through which they are studied and understood. Aoki writes:

These researchers were primarily interested in the outcomes of teaching, rather than in the understanding of teaching. Likening the school to a factory or a knowledge industry, they assume that what counts are the effects and results in terms of the investments made. Hence they typically cast their studies into a before-and-after design, concealing the domain of teaching in a black box, nonessential for research purposes, thereby wilfully ignoring the lived world of teachers and students (in Pinar and Irwin, 2005, p. 188).

Aoki's citation above implies that researchers should not concentrate too much on researching the technical aspects of a teacher's work, but rather on researching the wholeness of the being (teacher). Unlike Aoki's view in the above citation, most researchers on the positivist side of the fence believe in researching large sample sizes associated with an experimental methodology that often constitutes experimental and control groups. The role or purpose of the experimental and control group is to serve as dependent and independent variable respectively for the testing of a particular hypothesis. The methods used in this paradigm are empirical and quasi-experimental and great value is placed on objectivity (Guba,

1990). This approach to research is said to serve technical interest in that it seeks instrumental knowledge, which will “facilitate ... technical control over natural control” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 165). Similarly, Christie (1995) points out that a lot of criticism has emerged over the years regarding the use of positivist methods because of their failure to address issues of meaning and social impact. For example, positivist studies of the curriculum are usually technical in nature as their main interest is on prediction and control of the environment. Furthermore, the positivists’ view of the curriculum is often narrowed down to the following equation: ‘objectives + inputs = outputs’. From this standpoint (equation) the main focus of positivist researchers will be on studying the objectives of the Accounting curriculum (that is, the course structure) followed by how well a teacher or learner (inputs) meets the objectives by measuring this quantitatively in order to establish the output, such as pass rate or teacher content knowledge. In other words, as Luckett (1995, p. 131) asserts, the emphasis is on the product, which is what makes this paradigm of research attractive to “university executive and academic staff who are under enormous strain to make their education system more efficient. Teachers’ understanding of the subject matter in subjects like Accounting or their difficulty in understanding the content is often narrowed down to evaluating them (teachers) through achievement tests, which demonstrates a discourse of reality as something that can be discovered, measured and manipulated.

Conversely, phenomenology as a method is concerned only with the lived world of people. According to Pinar and Reynolds (2015), when they discovered phenomenology as both a philosophy and a method, instead of quantifying the stars in the sky as in a positivist paradigm, they learned to see the spaces between the stars – the empty spaces and matter that chemically bond stars all of a sudden became clear. They proclaimed that instead of discovering a method, they discovered themselves. To the phenomenologist it is the character and behaviour of people that is at the heart of any phenomenological investigation. Therefore the researcher’s positionality within the field is a search for deeper meaning and understanding of what it means to ‘be human’ or what ‘human nature’ means by explicating the phenomena exactly as they reveal themselves to the experiencing

person in all their concreteness and particularity. In other words, the phenomenologist focuses on the phenomenon as it presents itself without any judgment through a specific framework or theory. For example, in Husserlian phenomenology the focus of the researcher is on understanding perception, internal consciousness, inter-subjectivity and the lived world. From the Heideggerian perspective the phenomenologist is concerned with spatiality (as ready-to-hand), sociality (being-with) and self (*das man*) (Gallagher, 2014). From Merleau-Ponty's perspective, the focus is on perception and embodiment and the unity of these two phenomena in time and space (Gallagher, 2014).

The main difference between positivist research and phenomenological research lies in how the two methods relate to their respective pre-suppositions and pre-conceptions which guide the formulation of the two research approaches. Schweitzer argues that the phenomenological research methodology allows the researcher to use his own as well as others' experience in order to "bring to increasingly sharp clarity his own operative, personally evolving, elucidated preconceptions of a particular field of study" (1983, p. 172). A derivation of this approach is its access to meaning, which the phenomenologist considers to be the essence of phenomena. By explicating meaning the significance and relevance of an experience becomes intelligible (ibid, p. 172).

The sections that follow will elucidate the research method, which includes how the sample was constituted, the application of the research instruments (emphasising the phenomenological interview), and clearly outline the steps of each participants' transcript analysis. (The data explication framework was explained in Chapter Two, section 2.7).

### **3.4 Research Method**

#### **3.4.1 Sampling**

Many factors, including expense, time and accessibility, prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population. Researchers therefore choose a smaller group (subset) to represent the total population (Gay and Airasian, 2000).

This subset (or smaller group) is referred to as the *sample* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 143).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 153) distinguish between two main methods of sampling, namely (i) probability – also referred to as random sampling; and (ii) non-probability – also referred to as purposive sampling. They indicate that there are various types of probability sampling, namely, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, random stratified sampling, cluster sampling, stage sampling and multi-phase sampling (p. 153–155). In all types of probability sampling the participants stand an equal chance of being selected to be part of a study (p. 153). In other words, each participant is drawn randomly from the total population. Similarly, there are various types of non-probability sampling, namely convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, dimensional sampling, snowball sampling, volunteer sampling and theoretical sampling (p. 155-160). In non-probability sampling the participants do not stand an equal chance of being selected for a study (p. 153), instead the selected research participant will be hand-picked by the researcher with either a purpose in mind or because of convenience.

In phenomenology it is advisable not to interview too many participants. As stated in Chapter One, Groenewald (2004, p. 11) suggests that two to ten research participants are adequate for a phenomenological study. Boyd (2001) also regards two to ten participants as adequate to reach saturation. Creswell (1998, p. 65; 113) proposes in-depth interviews with a maximum of ten subjects. In line with the suggestions of the above authors (Groenewald, 2004; Boyd, 2001; and Creswell, 1998), Lilja (2013) investigated the influences of body, space and time on trustful relationships in the classroom using 4 research participants.

After considering the various types of sampling, non-probability sampling – more specifically purposive sampling – was deemed the most appropriate type of sampling for that particular study. Researchers choose purposive sampling for diverse reasons, for example, to achieve representativeness; to enable comparisons to be made; to focus on specific, unique issues or cases; to generate theory through the gradual accumulation of data from different sources (Teddlie and Yu,

2007, in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 156). I decided to use purposive sampling since my study focused on specific and unique cases, that is, the individual (unique) lived experiences of a number of Accounting teacher.

As explained in Chapter One, I initially planned to interview eight purposively selected Accounting teachers, but could only interview six. Originally I intended to select four Accounting teachers from historically disadvantaged schools and four Accounting teachers from historically advantaged schools in and around Cape Town. Eventually I could only interview three Accounting teachers from historically disadvantaged schools and three from historically advantaged schools in and around Cape Town; however, I had to exclude the data of the sixth participant because the data had reached saturation point (see Chapter One, section 1.7 for a more detailed explanation). The reason for selecting the research participants from historically disadvantaged schools as well as from historically advantaged schools was to determine whether there is a vast difference in the experiences of Accounting teachers who work in these two categories of schools. A key criterion for selecting the research participants was that they had to have taught on the NCS as well as on the CAPS. This means that teachers who had been teaching for more than 10 years were selected. Other criteria were ethnicity of the teacher, the gender and the area in which the school is located.

The ethnicity (for example, traditions, way of life, background) of the teacher was considered vital to determine whether it affects the way the Accounting teachers might experience the teaching of Accounting and the context within which they teach in general (that is, how they understand their professional practice). The gender of the Accounting teachers was significant in order to establish whether there is a difference in the way in which male and female teachers understand their professional practice. It was essential to ascertain whether the area in which the school is situated in any way influenced the way in which these Accounting teachers understood their professional practice, because the attitude of the learners towards their studies (schooling) would (most likely) be affected by the customs and socio-economic conditions of the area in which they are growing up. The area in which the school is located was an important aspect to consider, because it

is linked to whether the school is a historically advantaged or historically disadvantaged school. My work as lecturer and evaluator of in-service and pre-service teachers as well as my dealings with Senior Education Specialists (in the subject Accounting) steered me to the Accounting teachers I eventually selected to be part of this study. All of the research participants received their schooling under the NATED Report 550 and all of them started out their teaching careers teaching this same curriculum. All of the teachers who participated in this study had twenty years or more experience in the teaching profession and had experienced the changes in the South African educational landscape since the introduction of the democratic government.

Three of the schools are situated in the Metro North Education District, one in the Metro Eastern Education District, and one in the Overberg Education District. (The exact locations are indicated in Chapter Four, Figure 4.3). There is a huge difference in the demographics of the learners at all these schools. At one school there are only black learners. At two of the schools there are only coloured and black learners and at the other two schools there are black, white, coloured and Indian learners. (Chapter Four provides a broad overview of the research setting and describes the geographical environment as well as the context of the school within which each research participant worked.)

A brief illustration of the demographic characteristics of the research participants appears in Table 3.1: Teacher demographic characteristics.

The next section will describe the research instruments employed.



**Table 3.1:** Teacher demographic characteristics

No.	Research Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years of experience	Qualification(s)	Designation	Location of school	Grade(s) taught	Quintile rating of school
1.	Abigail	Female	56	Coloured	34	TD: Comm; FDE: Comm; BEd (Hons); ACE: Computer Applications and Technology	HOD: Accounting	Bellville	10 - 12	2
2.	Bryan	Male	47	Coloured	20	BComm; HDE; ACE: Language across the Curriculum	Deputy-Principal	Khayelitsha	10 - 12	1
3.	Claire	Female	47	White	25	BComm; HDE	HOD: Accounting	Brackenfell	8 - 12	4
4.	Deidre	Female	52	White	30	HTD: Commerce	Post-level 1 Teacher	Durbanville	8 - 12	5
5.	Edward	Male	56	Coloured	32	Teacher's Diploma; ACE: Accounting; ACE: School Leadership & Management	Deputy-Principal	Hermanus	10 - 12	1

### 3.4.2 Research Instruments

Husserl (1967) endorses the use of interviews, field notes and rich descriptive essays as research instruments in a study that employs a phenomenological methodology. In this study the appropriate research instruments used were interviews and field notes. The reasons for excluding the use of descriptive essays are that (i) the teachers might not be able to articulate their experiences in writing accurately; (ii) it is time-consuming and teachers might not have the time to do it because of their overloaded programmes. In this section I will firstly devote attention to interviews in general, secondly to the phenomenological interview, and finally, I will highlight the importance of the use of field notes in a phenomenological study.

#### a) Interviews

In qualitative studies researchers make extensive use of interviews as a research instrument to collect data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) describe the function of an interview as follows:

[Interviews] enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable (p. 409).

Numerous authors (amongst others, Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1980) have identified an array of different types of interviews used in qualitative studies, for example, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, group interviews, informal conversational interviews to list only a few. Each research method demands a specific type of interview.

A phenomenological methodology stipulates that the researcher must adopt a phenomenological attitude. The phenomenological attitude consists of two key distinctive aspects: ‘*epoché*’ (bracketing) and ‘*essences*’ (Husserl, 1967). Husserl points out that bracketing implies that “we must not make ascertains about that which we cannot *see*” (1967, p. xix). Therefore, the researcher must suspend his

or her natural attitude and concentrate only on the essences (subconsciously held ideas or *eidetic residuums*) of an experience (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.1 for a detailed description of *essences*). The narrative in the next section depicts how *epoché* is applied during a phenomenological interview in greater detail.

b) The phenomenological interview

Husserl's most profound observation on research is the following statement: "we must not make assertions about that which we do not ourselves *see*" (Husserl, 1967, p. xix). Husserl believed that we have to turn to the things themselves – *zu den Sachen selbst* – for it is only in the things themselves that we can discover the truth about any experience presented to us (the researchers). Husserl therefore posits that "*description is the prerequisite and matrix for all philosophic problems*" (Husserl, 1967, p. xx).

*Epoché* is the Greek word for "bracketing". Being a mathematician, Husserl equates bracketing with an equation within which the term standing in front of a bracket is separate from the terms inside the bracket. Similarly, in phenomenology to bracket means to detach (separate or distance) ourselves from the object or experience. The following comment clarifies the point succinctly:

Only through distancing, bracketing, and reflecting can we see an object as itself (that is, as it appears in itself), can we divorce an object from the projections of practical reason and the interpretations of our synthesizing consciousness (Husserl, 1967, p. xxi).

Thus, if researchers apply Husserl's principle of *epoché* in the field of education, it means that they have to distance themselves from the participant and/or their own experience(s) and focus on 'the things themselves'. According to Husserl, the things themselves reveal the object of consciousness in the minds of the participants. Therefore subjective truth (the participants' truth) about daily realities such as moods, emotions, challenges and impact of personal traumatic events in the lives of Accounting teachers shapes their consciousness. As far as possible I approached every interview without any preconceived ideas about any of the participants and I allowed the participants to describe their experiences

without interpreting their words. I have to admit that this was very difficult. It is normal for me (and perhaps for human beings in general) to want to be an active part of a conversation. During the interviews I often had to remind myself not to interject, but to conduct the interviews according to the guidelines of the phenomenological attitude which expects me to suspend my natural attitude.

Here I would like to reiterate the main aspect of the research question, that is, to investigate the lived experience of Accounting teachers. In this attempt to ascertain the lived experiences of Accounting teachers, I had to sub-divide the research question further, focusing on how Accounting teachers experience the circumstances (contexts) in which they teach; how the various changes in the curriculum impact on their disposition towards the curriculum; how their own convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which the Accounting teachers experience their work; and what motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do.

After careful consideration of the interest the interview would serve (that is, the phenomenon under investigation), I designed the interview schedule to consist of three main sections or themes, namely, (i) autobiographic information (teacher demographic characteristics, personal background, and teacher qualifications); (ii) teacher's professional context (lived space); and (iii) the teacher and the Accounting curriculum (see Appendix E: Interview Schedule). Although the researcher made use of an interview schedule, it is impossible to remain faithful to the exact sequence of the interview schedule in a semi-structured phenomenological interview. The interview schedule simply served as a guide.

#### c) Field notes

Field notes are used in conjunction with interviews. They can be viewed as a secondary data construction method (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Koopman declares that field notes are:

the sense data that the researcher records while in the field constructing his or her data. Field notes zoom in on what the researcher hears, sees, feels and thinks in the course of the data construction process. They give insight into

the deeper emotional expression of the participant and capture the mood and atmosphere in which the interview is conducted (2017, p. 18).

Levering (2006, p. 455) avers that “whatever the ‘inner-self’ may be, it shows on the *outside*”. In other words, field notes are an indication as to what the interviewee is thinking about, for example, as Levering (2006) continues, “the red which, under certain circumstances suddenly colours the face is perceived as shame” (p. 455).

During the interviews close attention was paid to the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of each research participant. I especially observed and noted the word choices, repetitive words, postures and gestures of the interviewees. As per Groenewald’s (2004) suggestion, additional notes were made the morning after the interview.

### 3.4.3 Data explication framework

Unlike experimental sciences (where data are limited, highly interpreted and consists of selected aspects of givenness) in phenomenology anything can serve as data (the epistemologically given). This means that all things are *given* in experience – every being, every aspect of experience, every event. For the scientist not all data are considered important, but for the phenomenologist they are. This is underlined by Husserl’s assertion that “*any experience whatever, in the widest possible signification of that expression*, can serve – and must serve – as foundation – datum for our understanding of the world” (1967, p. xxv). Husserl contends that lived experience can only be reported accurately through unstructured face-to-face interviews, field notes and rich descriptive essays. This study therefore investigated the lived experience of (selected) Accounting teachers through first-person accounts of their daily realities or lived-through data in the classroom, the wider school setting, and their immediate environment in order to understand how their own convictions about who they are influences the way in which they experience their work, and what motivates them to do what they do.

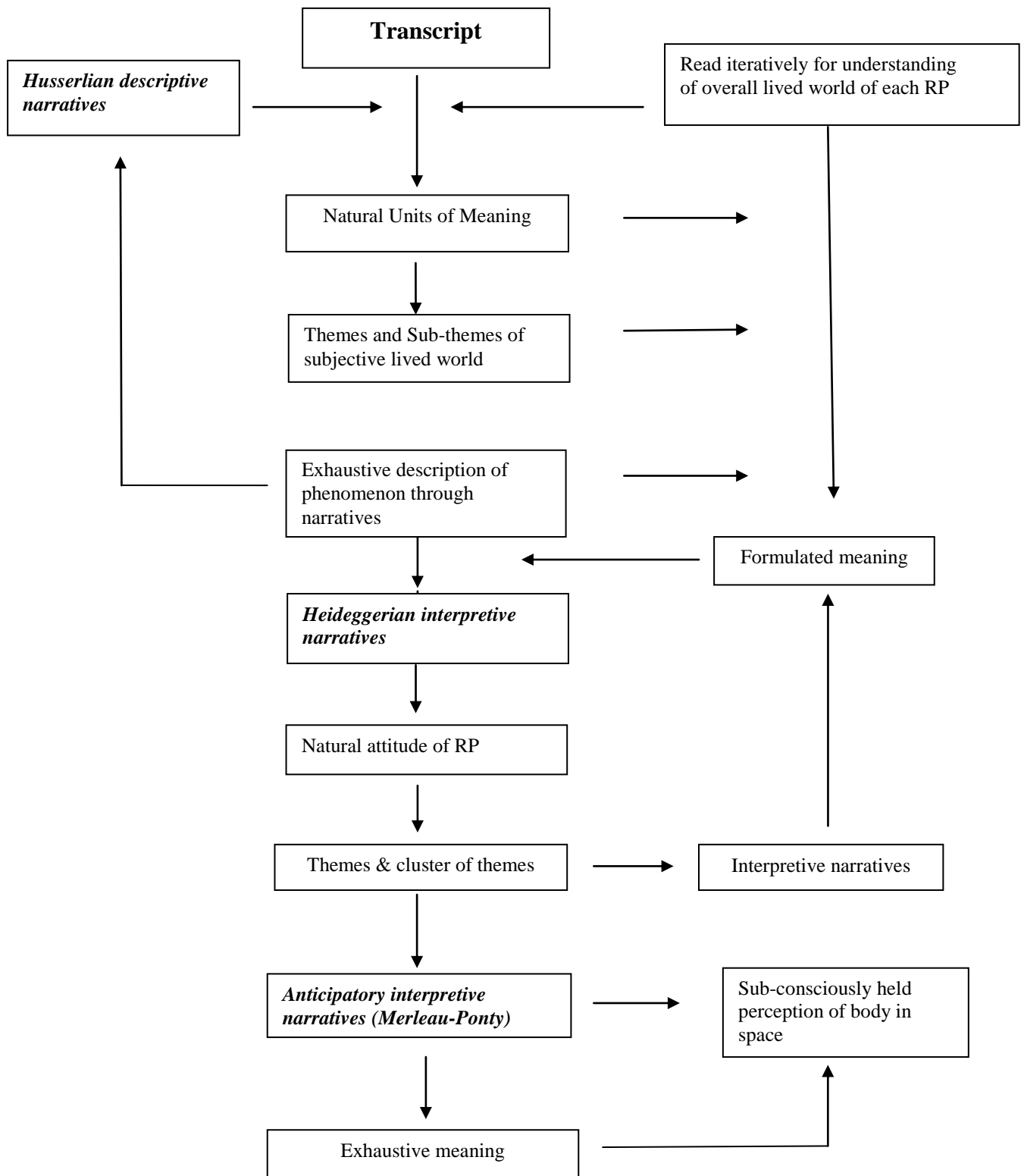
The next section explains how the analysis of the transcripts for each of the research participants was done.

#### 3.4.4 Transcript Analysis

As discussed in Chapter Two, the data explication framework of this study is divided into Husserl's descriptive narrative, Heidegger's interpretive narrative, and the anticipatory interpretive narrative which draws from Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory'. The descriptive part focuses mainly on each participant's 'direct words and phrases' to zoom in on their subjective lived world as perceived in their consciousness through their own stories. To do this, I had to bracket myself according to the art of what was possible from all biases, preconceived ideas and assumptions. This required me to set aside all ideas that were already known to me about the phenomenon. Heidegger's interpretive aspect allowed me to engage with each participant's transcript at a much deeper layer than what was said by focusing on the meaning behind what was said. From this perspective I searched for the embedded underlying meaning and the essences to yield meaningful insights into their consciousness (Lopez and Willis, 2004). These meanings were not obscure, but were drawn from the narratives as divulged in the interview. The anticipatory interpretive narrative, which draws on Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory', allowed me to probe a little bit further than what Heidegger's interpretive framework allowed me to see as it guided me towards a deeper understanding of the context in which each participant lived, such as the environment in which he or she was raised, the context in which he or she teaches, and so forth. Hence the overall interpretive explication narratives of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty will overlap as both philosophers search for an understanding of the relationship between the person and his or her environment.

Figure 3.1 provides a brief outline of the steps followed in the analysis of each research participant's transcript.

**Figure 3.1:** Overview of the transcript analysis



a) Step 1: Husserl's descriptive narrative

In the construction of the descriptive narrative I was guided by the work of Hycner (1985), Giorgio (1985), Collazzi (1978), Devenish (2002) and Koopman (2013). First, all these authors proposed explication procedures on how to bracket out preconceived ideas and judgments. Secondly, all these scholars adopted Husserl's (1970) famous slogan of 'returning to the things themselves' to construct a descriptive narrative. Lastly, in order to allow the information 'to speak for itself', it was delineated and increasingly paired down to form constituent profiles each with its own finite number of natural meanings. This stage of data explication formed the basis of a rigorous process.

*The process of constructing a constituent profile*

- Each transcript was read over and over again until I developed a clear picture of each research participant's (RP) lived world as a whole.
- This required me to bracket out my own personal biases, ideas and feelings. With this (bracketing the self) in mind I highlighted each significant statement, phrase and words in each RP's transcript related to my main research question and sub-questions.
- I wrote each statement on a separate sheet in its direct words listed as **Natural Units of Meaning (NUM)**. A NUM is defined as a segment of the original protocol which was "self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognisable aspect of *a participant's* lived experience" Schweitzer (1983, p. 171).
- Each new NUM was formulated when there were marked differences in-between sentences in each participant's transcript. Each NUM was written in full sentences and formed the basis of each RP's phenomenological attitude;
- The phenomenological interview was divided into the main themes, that is, each teacher's (i) *autobiographical information* that guided me to develop some sub-themes, for example, personal background (identities as Accounting teachers – who they are, where they grew up, and why they became Accounting teachers) and their qualifications (the training they



received at university), (ii) *the professional context within which they teach* (that is, their lived space – for example, resources at the school, support and management, amongst others), and (iii) *the teacher and the Accounting curriculum* (that is, how they engage with the Accounting curriculum).

- These NUMs became the stepping stone for **Units of Meaning (UM)** in the construction of the fundamental narrative of each participant. The unit of meaning in this study is defined as the central theme (CT) derived from the NUM without distorting the essential meaning conveyed by the NUM.
- In some cases CTs were condensed when there was repetition, or when the UM was not relevant to the research question. Each UM was grouped and sequenced for coherence of the data.
- After this was finalized, each UM was coded on every transcript to construct the constituent profile of each participant.
- Each constituent profile was validated by both my supervisor and an experienced phenomenologist. Minimal disagreements arose and differences were settled by consensus.
- After all parties agreed, I constructed the descriptive narrative based on the analysis of the constituent profile and returned it to each participant for further validation. After it was returned, I corrected each query to the satisfaction of the participant.

b) Step 2: Heidegger's interpretive narrative

- It is important to note that at this stage of the data explication process I was already familiar with the data and each RP's constituent profile; therefore this stage of analysis builds on the previous stage.
- The aim of this stage of the analysis process was to provide a rigorous explication of the interpretive reality of each research participant. To do this I reflected deeply on both the data and the field notes.
- This process was done first by both the researcher and an experienced phenomenologist.

- We first separated each constituent profile and focused on UM within the context of each profile.
- This delineation of constituent profiles allowed for the referencing of data and precise cross-referencing. Referents are single words and phrases such as “I hate”, “I am not happy”, “why do they allow such things...”, “this is very hard...”.
- These referents formed the *essences* of each RP’s natural attitude.
- Formulated meanings were coded into themes and clusters of themes derived.
- These themes and clusters of themes were further analysed for high-frequency words, emotive words, phrases and expressions that alluded to the main research question. I used non-verbal cues from the field notes to add meat to the bone of the skeletal NUM. All these words, phrases and sentences were highlighted and cross-referenced throughout the text. For example, if a phrase was repeated several times throughout the transcript, or if emotive words were used, this enabled the developments of themes and sub-themes.
- This was a crucial stage of the analysis process as it allowed for the construction of interpretive themes. This formed the basis for the extended descriptions.
- It is important to note that each interpretive theme focused on the research question and not the referents.
- All formulated meanings formed a distinctive theme which was both internally and externally convergent.
- After I finalised my themes, sub-themes and clusters of themes, I compared them with my peers (my supervisor, and an experienced phenomenologist) and checked for the accuracy of the overall thematic map. After comparing notes, numerous clusters emerged, which were divided into three main themes.
- The analysis of each transcript for interpretive meaning was finalised in an exhaustive description.

- The entire structure was based on the structure of the phenomenon, i.e. their perceptions of their lived world and how they cope within the system as teachers.
- c) Step 3: Anticipatory interpretive narrative (drawing on Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory')

In the construction of the anticipatory interpretive narrative I condensed both the descriptive and the interpretive narratives to write an anticipatory (extended) interpretive narrative of each research participant. At this stage I already had an overall view of each participant's subjective lived world as an Accounting teacher **and an extended view** regarding the teaching and learning of the subject, the context within which they teach, and their views about the curriculum in general. Hence, I started off by merging all the themes, sub-themes and cluster of themes in both the descriptive and interpretive narratives to get a general understanding of the lived body in time and place. In other words, I was interested in capturing how each participant's environment impacted on their becoming and un-becoming as teachers. For example, how do the mind (psychic), the body (physiological) and the school (physical) come together as the three orders of reality (Rabil, 1967). Merleau-Ponty suggests that in order to determine where these three aspects (mind, body and space) intersect one needs to understand behaviour as a structure which merges in various ways through reflection. I therefore searched for the following aspects.

- As I re-read each transcript, I searched for clues in the transcript that pointed me towards expressions or phrases that triggered reactive responses. For example, how do they react to issues of management, resources, and learner performances? Here I had to zoom in on particular constellations of associations carefully. Constellations are ideas or actions that are unique to each transcript and reveal meaning within the participants' personal lived world. I also had to draw on my field notes in search of particular body language to recapture the mood and distinctive behaviour. This required me to re-live each interview – to accurately capture their overall responses throughout the interview process.

- The previous step allowed me entry into Merleau-Ponty's 'unmovable forms' of existence of each RP. Unmovable forms represent aspects that dominate the participants' subconscious awareness as Accounting teachers in general. To search for this phenomenon I reflected on each participant's transcript and re-read it over and over in search for clues to the way that they perceive their roles as Accounting teachers. When I (re-)read each transcript my focus was on what inspired them to execute their duties effectively. I also had to look for whether their statements were superficial or authentic with respect to their roles as teachers. For example, is money their motivation, or do they want to make a significant difference in the lives of their learners.
- Lastly, I had to look for the symbolic meaning in their responses. This relates to issues of power and how power is used in their practices as teachers. At this stage particular interest was given to their subconscious awareness of the school leadership, departmental support, resources, attitude of the learners, their confidence and self-esteem as Accounting teachers, and how these aspects anticipate their being or existence as Accounting teachers.

Overall I was interested in the object of their consciousness, that is, how their actions relate to what is said in the transcript. Although Merleau-Ponty vehemently objects to reductionist analysis, at times I strayed and had to draw from my own experiences as a former Accounting teacher and current pre-service Accounting teacher educator to draw inferences and formulate conclusions in order to bring the body, time and space together as a unit of explication.

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

Beauchamp and Childress (1989) describe ethics as doing good and avoiding harm. Aluwihare-Samaranayake declares that ethics is an aspect of any research that affects the world of the researcher as well as the world of the participant (2012, p. 64). In fact, Aluwihare-Samaranayake continues, it even has an effect on the design of our research (ibid.)

### 3.5.1 Institutional ethics

It is important for researchers to be mindful of and adhere to ethical issues when they embark on an empirical study. The legal institutional entities involved in this study were the University of Stellenbosch (under whose auspices this research was conducted) and the Western Cape Education Department (the employer of the research participants, that is, the Accounting teachers). I requested consent from both these institutions to conduct this study. First, I had to obtain permission from the Research Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to do the research and to gain access to the schools (see Appendix B). Once this permission had been granted, I applied to Stellenbosch University's Ethical Committee (Human Research) for ethical clearance to do this research (see Appendix A). In my application for ethical clearance I included an example of a voluntary consent form for the selected participants (see Appendix C).

### 3.5.2 Ethical considerations

Cavan defines ethics as “a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others”, and that “while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better” (1997, p. 810). In order to protect the researchers and participants, certain guidelines and principles need to be set and agreed upon. These guidelines and principles are laid down to “minimise harm, increase the sum of good, assure trust, ensure research integrity, satisfy organisational and professional demands, and cope with new and challenging problems from concern to conduct” (Denzin & Giardina, 2007, in Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012, p. 65). Since this study investigated the private lives and experiences of participants (the selected Accounting teachers), I had to respect their rights, needs, values and desires. After speaking with each participant telephonically, I emailed the voluntary consent form to them so that they could familiarise themselves with its content (see Chapter One, section 1.11). Before every interview exceptional care was taken to reassure the participants that the data were and would remain confidential. In addition to the specific ethical aspects that were mentioned on the consent form, the transcriber of the interviews also agreed to sign a document protecting the confidentiality of the raw data (see Appendix D).

### 3.6 Trustworthiness in phenomenology

According to Gibson and Brown (2009), ‘trustworthiness’ focuses on the context of data collection and the data-construction methods rather than their inherent trustfulness. One way of ensuring that the data are trustworthy and to remain true to Gibson and Brown’s (ibid.) view was to understand and apply Husserl’s (1975) principle of the *epoché* in the field during the data-construction process. This meant I had to bracket out all my personal beliefs, values and understanding of being an Accounting teacher as the participants told their stories. This was very difficult to do at times, but I remained conscious of the principle in order not to contaminate the data.

Babbie and Mouton (2009) drew my attention to concepts such as ‘credibility’, ‘transferability’, ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’. To ensure that this study is credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable, I gave the transcripts to the research participants to verify whether their statements (words/experiences) had been recorded accurately. In this study I used Husserl’s descriptive narrative as the first step in the data explication process. Husserl stresses that the eidetic residuums of the participants need to be *described* – that is, there should be no interpretation of the data. At this stage reliability was assured by giving the transcript to each participant to check whether the transcription reflected his or her words (experiences) precisely and accurately. All of the interviewees agreed that the transcripts captured their experiences authentically.

The second stage of the data explication process made use of Heidegger’s interpretive narrative. During this stage the intention was to provide a rigorous explication of the interpretive reality of each research participant. This process was carried out by the researcher, the supervisor and a phenomenologist. In the third stage of the data explication process an anticipatory interpretive narrative (based on Merleau-Ponty’s ‘lived body theory’) was applied. Here the themes, sub-themes and cluster of themes in the descriptive and interpretive narratives were merged in order to represent an overall understanding of the lived body in time and place. To do this, I had to read and re-read the transcripts again and again to gain an understanding of how the participants perceive their roles as

Accounting teachers. I also drew on my field notes to look for specific signals such as body language in order to recapture the mood and particular behaviour of the participant.

### 3.7 Summary

In Chapter Three I first took the reader on a journey through my own encounter with phenomenology – a journey that started with my interaction with Accounting teachers during my visits to schools while evaluating pre-service teachers. During these conversations I learned about the challenges facing Accounting teachers. These informal discussions encouraged me to probe deeper into the situation, which eventually led to my undertaking this study. As I surveyed the literature for an appropriate research methodology and research method, I came across phenomenology. I learned that phenomenology can be classified as a philosophy and as a method; hence it served as the philosophical foundation for this study as well as the research method. Another interesting aspect that the literature revealed is that lived experience is the starting point and end point of a study that is based on phenomenological foundations (Husserl, 1975; Van Manen, 1990). This led to the formulation of the title of this study: *A phenomenological investigation into the lived experience of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province*. In the same vein as Pinar and Reynolds (2015), instead of quantifying the stars in the sky as in a positivist paradigm, I wanted to see the “sky in its entirety” (p. 2). Therefore, this study aims to establish how the research participants are coping with (experiencing) simply being Accounting teachers. An important feature of phenomenological methodologies is that a phenomenologist seeks to understand the participants’ (in this case Accounting teachers’) world, unlike the positivists, who seek only to measure it. Another significant aspect that was stressed in this chapter is Husserl’s phenomenological attitude involving *epoché* (bracketing) and *essences* that is active during the interview stage and the data explication process. In Chapter Two the literature review focused on the ideas of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and their philosophical significance for this study. Accordingly, in order to answer the research question and remain true to the research paradigm,

the data explication process consisted of three main sections, namely Husserl's descriptive narrative, Heidegger's interpretive narrative and the anticipatory interpretive narrative based on Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory'. The last section of this chapter discussed the relevant ethical issues and the issue of establishing trustworthiness in phenomenology.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the research setting.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE RESEARCH SETTING**

By having a body I am in the world and by having a finite body I am part of the world.  
(Levering, 2006, p. 452)

#### **4.1 Introduction**

According to Michael Bottery (2002), global demands, with their focus on the ‘knowledge economy’, threaten to eclipse everything else and have become the very *raison d’être* of education. In the transition to a post-apartheid South Africa these global demands also permeated the education system, in which the focus has become high knowledge and high skills driven by neoliberalism.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, education in South Africa has become designed to advance the agendas of multinational corporations and businesses by preparing ‘learners for the world of work’ (DBE, 2011). Since the standard of education has dropped over the years, it no longer serves all the needs of learners and communities, resulting in schools located in poor neighbourhoods being plagued with high drop-out rates, teenage pregnancies, gangsterism and so forth. This capitalist and neoliberal agenda of the school system has widened the gap between rich and poor. Through my engagement with the principals of schools, conversations with colleagues, personal visits to schools and news broadcasts, I have witnessed how children coming from poor communities face the intractable obstacle of acquiring a good and quality education, while those children in affluent neighbourhoods attend good schools that are well resourced with highly qualified and experienced teachers (for a more comprehensive analysis, see Le Grange, Reddy and Beets, 2012).

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<sup>8</sup> Neoliberalism: the term refers to a policy model of social studies and economics that transfers control of economic factors from the public sector to the private sector. “With the revival of neoliberal politics, we have witnessed a change in the role of the state from that of a provider (of basic needs of citizens) to that of monitor and regulator” (Le Grange, 2006). This changing role has affected many spheres of society – education being one area. The School’s Act of 1996, for example, which devolves powers to governing bodies, is only one of the numerous policies introduced by the post-apartheid government that is underpinned by a neoliberal agenda (Le Grange, 2006).

This brings me to the main objective of this chapter, that is, to provide an overview of the research setting in which this study was conducted. In so doing, I want to draw attention once again to the immense inequality in South Africa. In addition, I wish to explain the ‘learning spaces’ that Accounting teachers and learners experience at each school in a class- and raced-based society. Such disparities still prevail to this day, given the fact that many schools, which had previously been designated for specific racial groups still remain overwhelmingly populated by these groups (Chisholm and Sujee, 2006). According to Kahle (1998), equality in education will occur only if all the diverse racial groups are treated equally and when all children have an equal opportunity to maximise their potential. By providing a rich description of these schools and their locations, I intend to sketch the multiple ordering structures, such as the geographical context, the community, and the schooling environment, that shape the culture of teaching and learning. I will then link each school setting to the quintile rating system in which schools are grouped according to the income of parents, the level of education of the community and the unemployment rate in the area, all rooted in the long legacy of apartheid and apartheid education with its racial policies that shaped the educational landscape for many decades.

As a means to make education more affordable to poorer communities, the government amended the Norms and Standards for funding in 2009. The National Quintile system (NQ) – also referred to as the quintile index rating – was introduced to improve equity in education, given the legacy of apartheid. This quintile rating system places all schools into one of five categories. NQ1 indicates the poorest public schools, while NQ5 represents the wealthiest public schools. The quintile index rating of each school is based on three poverty indicators, namely the rates of income, unemployment and level of education within the school’s catchment area.

The government’s monetary allocation to a school depends on the quintile index rating of that school. This means that the government will allocate more money to NQ1 to NQ3 schools compared to NQ4 and NQ5 schools. The state allocation is calculated by multiplying the learner allocation for a specific school (based on

the quintile index rating) by the number of registered learners in that school. NQ4 and NQ5 schools are allowed to supplement their revenue by charging school fees, since they are allocated much less money by the state. The amount of school fees is determined by the school governing body every year. The advantage that flows from NQ4 and NQ5 schools charging exorbitant school fees is that they can employ additional teachers if necessary, which leads to a favourable teacher-learner ratio (Le Grange, Reddy and Beets, 2012).

In the next section I provide an overview of the research setting.

## **4.2 Overview of the research setting**

This research was conducted in the Western Cape province of South Africa, more precisely in and around the city of Cape Town stretching as far as the coastal town of Hermanus approximately 130 km south-east of Cape Town (see Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).

In 2016 the Western Cape province was one of the country's top performing province in education. It was second in line with a pass rate of 84.2% (Umalusi Report, 2016). In 2016 the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, mentioned on SABC 2 that the Western Cape has fostered "very healthy energy and competition" and in so doing was the only province that showed an increase in the Grade 12 pass rate for 2016. This announcement by the Minister to the nation does not reflect the real image and state of education in South Africa, given the fact that there is ample evidence of how many children today find themselves in a so-called 'township'<sup>9</sup> school that is poorly resourced and in most cases staffed by under- or unqualified teachers including, amongst others, Accounting teachers. Furthermore the Minister neglects to point out the contradictions between schools in the Western Cape and those schools outside the Western Cape and how the social lives of these learners are vastly different from an economic standpoint.

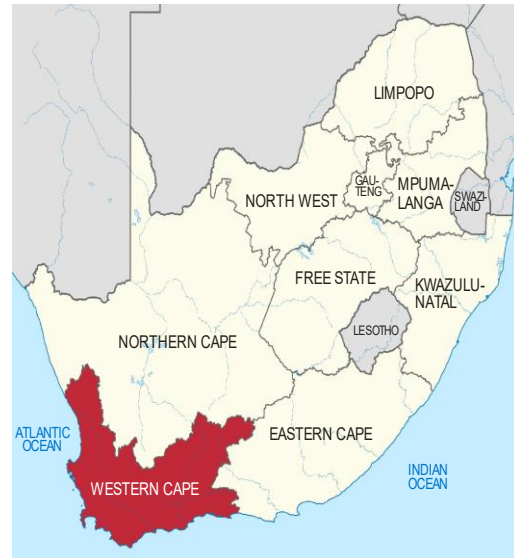
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<sup>9</sup> Township: In South Africa, this term refers to the often underdeveloped urban living areas that, from the late 19th century until the end of apartheid, were reserved for non-white residents, namely coloured, Indian and black people.

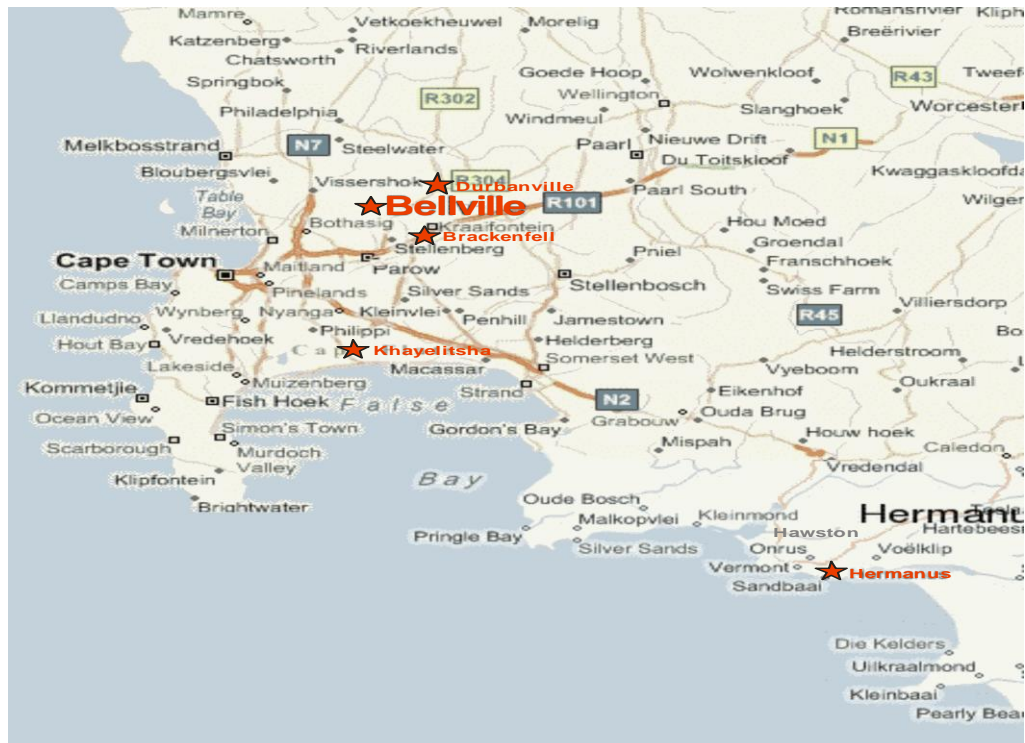
In the sections below I will primarily describe the various contexts within which each research participant works. But first Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate exactly where this research was conducted.



**Figure 4.1:** Map of Africa showing South Africa



**Figure 4.2:** Map of South Africa showing the Western Cape province



**Figure 4.3:** Map of the Western Cape province illustrating the various towns and townships where this research was conducted

### **4.3 A description of the context within which each participant works**

#### **4.3.1 Research participant Abigail: School A**

##### **a) Description of the geographical environment**

The school where Abigail teaches is located in Bellville South. Originally Bellville was named the “12-Mile Post”, because it is situated 12 miles (20 km) from Cape Town city centre. It was founded as a railway station on the line from Cape Town to Stellenbosch and Strand. In 1861 it was renamed Bellville, after the surveyor-general Charles Davidson Bell. Under apartheid Bellville South was home to what was historically called the ‘coloured community’, which was separated from the white neighbourhood on the east by Modderdam Road (now Robert Sebukwe Road) and on the north side by a railway line. During the apartheid era the coloured and white communities were usually separated by a railway line.

Abigail’s school is situated on the outskirts of the Central Business District (CBD) of Bellville. It is surrounded by a historically disadvantaged residential area (see Figure 4.4) with some factories in between. Whilst driving through the area en route to the school, I noticed fairly young people as well as older people sitting outside or simply standing on the pavement or leaning over their gates – doing nothing. Others were sitting in their yards on make-shift chairs and chatting in groups. Presumably, these were unemployed people. A few others were scurrying to the small grocery store or general dealer on the corner.

Many years ago, during the apartheid regime, the forefathers of these residents were forcefully removed from their homes and relocated to Bellville South. The residents are mostly low-skilled and semi-literate. Consequently, the unemployment rate in this area is fairly high. This high unemployment rate in the area has led to youths joining various gangs, therefore there is a significant level of crime in the area. Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 show the context within which Abigail works.





**Figure 4.4:** Residential area around Abigail's workplace (School A)



**Figure 4.5:** Abigail's workplace – administration building (School A)



**Figure 4.6:** Back of School A – playground and/or rugby field and netball court

b) Description of the context within which the school functions

Over the past five or six years the total number of learners at the school dropped from well over 1 000 to approximately 980 by 2016. Before 1994 the school consisted only of coloured learners. Now there are about 75% coloured learners and 25% black learners. The learners who attend this school do not only come from the immediate area, but also from various other historically disadvantaged areas, such as Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Kuils River and Eerste River. These are all towns(hips) in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. The school has one Principal, two Deputy-Principals, five HODs, and 30 post-level one educators. Abigail is the Commerce HOD at the school.

The school buildings are in a fairly good condition; in other words, they are in a stable condition – for example, no broken windows (refer Figure 4.5). School A offers learners the opportunity to play rugby, soccer, netball and table-tennis as well as to sing in the choir. (Presently there are no societies for learners to belong to; however, there are plans to introduce one or two in 2017.) The grounds are fairly clean, except for heaps of branches that have been left lying under a row of trees after the trees were trimmed months ago judging by the colour of the dead branches. The school does not have an abundance of resources (that is, teaching and learning aids); it simply uses the basics. Teachers often have to purchase their own photocopying paper. A highlight for the school is that it received laptops for each teacher from the Department of Basic Education in mid-2015.

School A has a quintile index rating of 2, which implies that the amount for school fees is low, resulting in the lack of adequate resources for teachers, mediocre sporting facilities, and very few cultural activities being offered. Furthermore, the amount of school fees charged per learner does not allow the school to employ additional teachers in subjects where they are needed.

For many years Abigail was the only Accounting teacher for Grades 10 to 12. She taught Accounting to both the English-medium and to all the Afrikaans-medium classes. Recently the school employed another teacher for Grade 10 Accounting. Abigail's Grade 10 Accounting class was replaced with a CAT

(Computer Applications Technology) class. There is one other teacher who teaches EMS (Economics and Management Sciences) to the Grade 8 and 9 learners. (The composition of EMS is explained in Chapter One, section 1.3)

In 2016 the number of learners in the English Grade 10 Accounting class was 44 learners and in the Afrikaans Grade 10 class it was 29 learners. In 2016 the English Grade 11 Class consisted of 17 learners, while the Afrikaans Grade 11 class consisted of 9 learners. The total number of Accounting learners in 2016 for the Grade 12 English class was 23, while the Afrikaans Grade 12 class totalled 5. The Grade 12 pass rate for Accounting over the last three years rose from 65% in 2014 to 88% in 2016.

#### 4.3.2 Research participant Bryan: School B

##### a) Description of the geographical environment

Khayelitsha (kaɾ.ə'li:tʃə) is a partially informal township situated in the Western Cape, South Africa. It is located on the Cape Flats approximately 25 km south-east of the City of Cape Town. In isiXhosa the word *Khayelitsha* means 'new home'. It is the second biggest black township in South Africa after Soweto in Johannesburg. 'Partially informal' refers to the fact that the township started out as a very rural place, but developed into a town where some people live in brick houses, some in shacks; some business owners have their shops on the pavement, whilst others have huge buildings from which they operate. Khayelitsha was built in terms of the policies of racial segregation of the apartheid government. In the early days the residents of Khayelitsha lived in tents. Since 1983 the township has grown rapidly. Many migrants from the Eastern Cape moved to Khayelitsha in search of work. Many of these migrants brought their cattle with them to earn a living by selling milk to the residents. Within its first two years Khayelitsha grew to about 30 000 residents. Today, Khayelitsha is a vibrant township, albeit with great disparities. The township is home to over 500 000 residents, some of whom live in brick houses but many others live in shacks. Despite the fact that this area produces many of the black university graduates in the Western Cape, the average



income quintiles lie in the bottom tiers. The Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 show the context within which Bryan works.



**Figure 4.7:** Residential area around Bryan's workplace (School B)



**Figure 4.8:** Bryan's workplace (School B)



**Figure 4.9:** Multi-purpose hall (School B)

b) Description of the context within which the school functions

Many of the learners at Bryan's school hail from the Eastern Cape and now live in the Western Cape – in Khayelitsha. Most of the learners are from Khayelitsha, while some are from Mfuleni, a neighbouring township. Remarkably, there are many more girls than boys at this school. There are approximately 790 learners at the school and all of them are black. The medium of instruction is English. School B has one Principal, two Deputy-Principals, four HODs, and 20 post-level one teachers. Bryan is one of the Deputy-Principals at his school.

School B has a quintile index rating of 1, meaning that the learners do not pay school fees. Consequently the school cannot easily employ additional teachers if necessary; they lack the teaching and learning resources, sporting facilities, a wide variety of societies for learners to belong to and cultural activities for learners to do compared to a school with a much higher quintile index rating. For example, the school only offers netball, volleyball, soccer, drama, and has a debating society.

Bryan has a data-projector and a laptop at his disposal, but he opts not to use the equipment because he prefers the old style of teaching, that is, lots of classroom discussion with some writing on the board. Generally, those teachers who have their own classrooms (especially the Science teachers) normally use data-

projectors and laptops. There are enough Accounting textbooks, because the learners return them every year (Appendix F).

There are four Accounting classes, namely one Grade 10 class, two Grade 11 classes and one Grade 12 class. Each Accounting class has about 32 to 42 learners. There are two Accounting teachers, namely Bryan and a female colleague. Bryan teaches the Grades 11 and 12 learners and the colleague teaches the Grade 10 learners. There is one EMS teacher at the school. However, she is not very efficient in teaching the Accounting aspects of the subject (Appendix F). Every year she goes for training, but still needs lots of guidance, resulting in the Grade 10 Accounting teacher first having to teach all the basic Accounting principles that should have been covered in Grade 9 before starting with the Grade 10 content (Appendix F).

The average pass rate for Accounting in Grade 12 has ranged between 70% and 80% over the last few years. The learners who pass normally do so with percentages between 30% and just over 60%. The majority of these learners obtain results in the 30% to 40% range. A few learners will obtain between 50% and just over 60%. Very few learners ever obtain 70% or more, except in 2015, when two learners obtained 76% and just over 80%.

#### 4.3.3 Research participant Claire: School C

##### a) Description of the geographical environment

Claire's school is situated in Brackenfell. This suburb is in the northern part of Cape Town. It is known as the gateway to the winelands. During the early 1900s Brackenfell was a major road crossing and later in 1913 the suburb was established. Brackenfell derived its name from a fern common to the area, called the Bracken fern. During the apartheid period Brackenfell was home to only whites. Nowadays, although the whites are still in the majority, the town has a mixed racial composition, namely whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians. The residents in the area are formally educated and it appears that most inhabitants are employed, because as I was driving through the area I did not notice anybody walking in the streets. Judging by the number of cars (parents fetching their



children from school) it is quite obvious that many of the learners do not actually come from the immediate area. Many of the older learners come to school with their own transport, for example, with cars or small motorbikes that were parked outside of the school. Figures 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 show the context within which Claire works.



**Figure 4.10:** Residential area around Claire's workplace (School C)



**Figure 4.11:** Claire's workplace (School C)



**Figure 4.12:** Rugby field (School C)

b) Description of the context within which the school functions

Before 1994 School C was a white school, but now there are white, coloured, Indian and black learners. This school is a parallel medium (has both English and Afrikaans classes) school. The staff profile at Claire's school is as follows: one Principal, two Deputy-Principals, nine Heads of Department (Claire is the Commerce HOD), 57 post-level one teachers, a combined total of 25 Administrative and Amenities staff (including a receptionist, a secretary, financial and general administrative clerks, security guards, drivers, and general workers). The school has approximately 1 400 learners.

Every classroom is equipped with either a data-projector, or an overhead projector, or a television monitor, and there is a computer in every classroom. Some teachers have personal laptops. In addition to the school or outside companies donating laptops to some teachers, a few interactive white boards were also donated.

Learners can choose to participate in a variety of sports activities, namely rugby, cricket, athletics, netball, hockey, tennis, cross-country, table tennis, golf, chess, drum majorettes, target shooting, and cycling. The school has three rugby fields, four netball fields, four tennis courts, and one astro hockey field. School C also

offers a range of cultural activities by various societies, namely drama society (plays, poetry, choir, and music), the debating and public speaking society, and an interact society (this focuses on community service).

School C has a quintile index rating of 4, meaning that their school fees are high, meaning that they can appoint additional staff, provide their teachers with the necessary resources, provide their learners with a wide range of cultural activities, and maintain their sporting facilities at a high standard.

Claire teaches Grades 8 to 12. This means that she teaches EMS Grades 8 and 9, and Accounting Grades 10 to 12. The average size of the Accounting classes is 30. In 2016 the learners who did Accounting numbered about 85. There are three Accounting teachers at her school and all of them teach EMS as well. This means that all the teachers who teach EMS in the GET Band are also qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of that subject. If necessary, the Business Studies and Economics teachers can both teach the Accounting aspects of EMS. The Grade 12 pass rate for Accounting is usually 97%.

#### 4.3.4 Research participant Deidre: School D

##### a) Description of the geographical environment

Deidre's school is situated in Durbanville in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. During the 1800s Durbanville was the first overnight stop for wagons heading out of Cape Town. It first started out in 1825 as Pampoenkraal. The following year (1836) the name was changed to D'Urban. However, in 1886 the town was renamed Durbanville in order to prevent confusion with Durban in Kwazulu-Natal. Although the suburb has grown rapidly over the past 30 years, it has preserved its rural atmosphere and building style.

The school is situated in an area that has beautiful houses with lush and well-maintained gardens. Figures 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15 show the context within which Deidre works.





**Figure 4.13:** Residential area around Deidre's workplace (School D)



**Figure 4.14:** Deidre's workplace (School D)



**Figure 4.15:** Area around Deidre's workplace (School D)

b) Description of the context within which the school functions

Before 1994 School D used to be an all-white school with only white teachers and white learners. Now it is a multiracial school with white, black, coloured and Indian learners. The total number of learners at the school is about 1 200. The ratio is approximately 70% white learners and the rest a combination of coloured, black and Indian learners. School D has one Principal, two Deputy-Principals, eight Departmental Heads, 66 post-level one teachers (of which Deidre is one), and a combined total of 25 Administrative and Amenities staff (including receptionist, secretary, financial and general administrative clerks, estate manager, and ground workers).

Every classroom is equipped with a data-projector, an interactive whiteboard, a computer and all the stationery that the teacher needs. The governing body is very active in obtaining all the teaching and learning aids for the teachers.

School D offers an array of cultural activities, for example, acting, playwriting, musicals, talent shows, drama, debating and writing poetry. With regards to sporting facilities, their learners can sign up for rugby, netball, water polo, indoor hockey, tennis, cross-country and cricket. The school also boasts an astro turf for athletic competitions. Their indoor pool is housed within a huge multi-purpose centre. Deidre's school also offers golf and chess, and has a drum majorettes team. The school grounds are kept in an immaculate condition. Although much emphasis is placed on sport in order to develop self-discipline and teamwork, the academic performance of learners is the top priority.

Deidre's school is classified as a NQ5 school, which means that their school fees are exorbitant, with the result they can employ many additional teachers and other staff, as well as offer all the above-mentioned resources, sport and cultural activities.

Deidre teaches EMS to Grades 8 and 9 and Accounting to Grades 10 to 12. There are three teachers who teach EMS and Accounting. The size of the school's Accounting classes averages about 20 to 25 learners yearly. In Grade 12 they normally have about 75 Accounting learners in total, with a pass rate for



Accounting of around 98% every year with an average percentage of about 60%. More specifically, in 2016 School D obtained an overall Grade 12 pass rate for Accounting of 99.2%.

#### 4.3.5 Research participant Edward: School E

##### a) Description of the geographical environment

Edward's school is situated a few kilometres from one of South Africa's favourite holiday destination towns, namely Hermanus. Hermanus started out as a little fishing town known for its peace and quiet and beautiful scenery. Today it is the bustling centre of the Overberg and Cape Whale Coast. Hermanus was first called Hermanuspietersfontein after its founder, Hermanus Pieters, in the early 1800s. As the town grew, the long name became problematic for the postal services. In 1902 the postmaster decided to change the name to simply Hermanus.

In Hermanus the inequalities between the rich and the poor are obvious. For the most part the town is still racially segregated with the whites still living in the affluent and scenic parts and the vast majority of the coloureds and blacks living in the unattractive parts. There are very few coloureds and Indians living in between the whites in these affluent residential areas. Many of the whites are business owners, while the coloureds and blacks are mostly labourers, domestic aids and/or shop assistants who live in the neighbouring areas. Very few coloureds and blacks have professional jobs. Furthermore, many of the houses in the residential areas and/or apartments in the holiday complexes belong to South Africans and international owners who visit Hermanus for the holiday season a few times a year.

As mentioned above, Edward's school is a few kilometres from Hermanus. In contrast to the charming town of Hermanus, the area surrounding Edward's school does not enjoy the same tranquillity and beautiful scenery. Unemployment in the area is very high and it is notorious for gangs – consequently crime is rife. Many of the residents are low-skilled and semi-literate and provide cheap labour to the business owners and/or households in Hermanus and the adjacent towns.

The area boasts a Blue Flag beach with beautiful white sands ideal for long walks (as shown in Figure 4.16). Sadly, not many residents walk on the beach for leisure. The area offers very little entertainment for young people besides a communal Olympic-sized swimming pool with separate *braai* (Afrikaans for barbeque) facilities near the beach. This facility is frequented by the locals during the summer holiday season. Figures 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18 show the context within which Edward works.



**Figure 4.16:** Beautiful settings around Edward's workplace (School E)



**Figure 4.17:** Residential area around Edward's workplace (School E)



**Figure 4.18:** Edward's workplace (School E)

b) Description of the context within which the school functions

School E has one Principal, one Deputy-Principal (namely, Edward) four HODs, 23 post-level one teachers, one administrative clerk, one administrative cleaner and a driver. There are approximately 745 learners at the school. Learners who attend School E do not all hail from the immediate area. Many of them are from neighbouring towns, such as Kleinmond and Mount Pleasant. There are about 70% coloured learners at this school and about 30% black learners.

The school provides the basic teaching and learning aids for every teacher, with the exception of text books. Edward often sources text books from the more affluent high school in Hermanus. Most classrooms still have the old chalkboards, some classrooms have the normal white boards, and 12 out of the 22 teachers have data-projectors and laptops.

Although the grounds of the school are kept clean, teachers have to clean their own classrooms. On the odd occasion the caretakers would clean a classroom, but the primarily task of the caretakers (with respect to classrooms) is only to check whether the classrooms are clean. The school offers netball and chess. Although the school offers rugby as a sport, it has been using the municipal rugby field for just over three years, because they are not financially able to maintain the school's rugby field. (There are plans to revive cricket in 2018).

Learners have the opportunity to join a drama society, a dance society, the cooking club and the school choir.

Edward's school has a quintile index rating of 1, which means that the learners do not pay any school fees. In addition, it implies that the school cannot employ extra teachers if they need to and/or provide the learners with a wide variety of sporting codes, societies and cultural activities to participate in.

The number of learners in Grades 10 to 12 Accounting classes has dropped since 1994 from between 10 and 15 to about 6 learners in Grade 12 in 2014. The school has four EMS teachers. However, the EMS teacher for the Grade 9 learners is not qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the subject; as a matter of fact, he is not even trained to teach any commerce subject at all. He has a qualification in the Social Sciences (History and Geography). In 2014 there were no Grade 10 learners doing Accounting, which means there were no Grade 12s in 2016. In 2016 the Grade 10 Accounting learners numbered 11. During 2014 and 2015 Edward taught Tourism. He is the only Accounting teacher. He therefore taught Grades 10 to 12 all the years except in 2016, when he only had Grade 10s. For the past few years the Grade 12 pass rate for Accounting has been about 75%. Although the Grade 12 pass rate for Accounting at Edward's school is not low, the highest mark is usually a low C or D.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Chapter Four mainly provided a detailed description of the research setting in which this study was conducted. I introduced the chapter by highlighting the inequalities that were produced by the apartheid government and exacerbated in the post-apartheid era by adherence to neoliberalism - a system partly responsible for widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Secondly, I briefly explained the introduction of the quintile index rating for schools, which is based on three poverty indicators: income, unemployment rates and the level of education of the community in which the schools are located. The quintile index rating was implemented to address some of the inequalities stemming from the past in schools. Finally, in an attempt to illustrate the disparities between the more affluent and the poorer schools, I presented a detailed description of the geographical environment within which each research participant teaches and of the environment within which the school functions.

The next chapter focuses on the data explicitation process.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA EXPLICITATION**

Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the positing of things becomes possible (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 243)

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to present the data as captured in the transcript of each participant in a phenomenologically coherent way. To do so, I first craft a constituent profile of each participant derived from the interview transcripts. Secondly, I use the constituent profile to serve as the basis to present a Husserlian descriptive narrative as indicated in the transcript analysis framework. Husserl believed that experience needs no interpretation as it represents the things-in-themselves, therefore, the data are presented ‘as is’ without any bias or interpretation. Thirdly, in order to arrive at a more rigorous description of the lived-world experiences of each Accounting teacher, the constituent profile juxtaposed with the descriptive narrative serves as the basis for crafting the interpretive narrative by drawing on Heidegger’s (1927/1967) concept of *Dasein*. Finally, after presenting the interpretive narrative, I present an anticipatory interpretive narrative which draws on the scholarly work of Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) to capture the impact of time and space on each teacher’s lived world – also referred to as the ‘lived body’ theory. In the following three sections, I briefly discuss the context within which each narrative was constructed.

#### **5.2 Descriptive narrative – Husserl’s ‘lifeworld theory’**

Before the construction of each research participant’s constituent profile, I read each transcript (story) over and over until I understood the essence of their stories. In search of these essences I was guided by Seidman’s (2013) work on how to craft a constituent profile when working in a phenomenological paradigm. He states that a researcher must mark and label important passages of interest related to the research questions. By doing so, I ended up with two transcripts for every participant, that is, (i) the original, and (ii) the marked and labelled transcript. To

gain an even better perspective and understanding of their stories whilst reading the marked and labelled transcript over and over, I tried to place myself in each research participant's shoes in an attempt to understand their lived worlds. For example, in part one of the interview my focus was on their experiences as children, that is, where they grew up, their family history, parental influences, their school and university careers, and so forth (see Appendix E). Each time I re-read the transcript Seidman's (2013) advice echoed through my mind and prompted me to consistently ask myself which 'words', 'phrases' or 'passages' are the most compelling and I underlined (highlighted) them. Here my focus was on the essences of their lived worlds and I separated the essences from the fullness of their lived experiences in the transcripts to craft their constituent profiles. This means that I had to put together a range of disconnected elements and episodic moments in a coherent way so that it addresses my research questions. Coulter and Smith (2009) refer to this process as "reworking, rendering, crafting in the construction zone" of phenomenological research (p. 587).

Once I was satisfied with the crafting and construction of each constituent profile, I gave it, together with the interview transcript, to my supervisor and an experienced phenomenological scholar for verification. After all queries and disagreements were settled, I was ready to start drafting the descriptive narrative. During this crafting process I had to constantly remind myself of Husserl's (1983) famous slogan about 'returning to the things themselves', which kept me focused and provided me with a structure (format) to construct the 'pre-reflective' life world of each research participant. The lifeworld in this explication process refers to the integrative complexity of how the fullness of their experiences as school children, their social development and their educational journeys reflects in their practices as Accounting teachers, which in turn affects the way they think about and relate to the content and the curriculum framework within which they work. Bengtsson (2005, in Berndtsson, Claesson, Friberg, and Öhlén, 2007) refers to this phenomenon as a pluralistic complex reality or as Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) calls it, the 'enabling conditions' that constitute a 'range of events' and occurrences that shape a person's thinking and existence in time and space. In other words, the descriptive narrative (derived from the constituent profile)



focused mainly on the integration of life and world, object and subject, inner and outer, body and mind. To capture this accurately, and to stay true to the phenomenological circle of my data explication framework, I tried as far as possible to use the ‘direct’ words in which each participant expressed their views, rather than my own interpretation (transformation) of their words. The crafting of the descriptive narrative reflected each participant’s voice. I followed the same process for part two of the interview by constructing the constituent profile first, followed by the descriptive narrative to capture their life worlds. In this section the focus shifts to their practices as Accounting teachers, that is, the context of the school within which they teach (for example, resources, support and management), how they perceive and teach the subject, and how they engage with the Accounting curriculum. The constituent profile and descriptive narrative provided the basis to construct the interpretive narrative which follows below.

### **5.3 Interpretive narrative – Heidegger’s *Dasein***

The interpretive narrative builds on the descriptive narrative of each participant. This was done to provide a more rigorous explication of the interpretive reality of each research participant. In order to construct an interpretive narrative I had to reflect deeply on both the data presented in the transcripts, the constituent profile, the descriptive narrative and the field notes. As alluded to in the transcript analysis framework, at this stage I the researcher was already familiar with the constituent profile of each participant and focused mainly on units of meaning (UM) and contextualised the lived world experiences of each teacher. Here phrases, high-frequency words, emotive words and the field notes became what Van Manen (1990, p. 36) refers to as the “breathing of meaning” into the explication of the data as these phrases, words and field notes assign meaning to the phenomena of lived life. The explication process in the first part of the interview placed the emphasis on valuable insight into *who* these participants are, *how* they were discursively shaped by their parents and society and the real reason(s) *why* they entered the teaching profession, specifically as Accounting teachers. The explication process of the second part of the interview focused on how they experience the context of the school within which they teach (for



example, resources, support and management) and how they perceive the teaching of Accounting (for example, their classroom situations, their engagement with the curriculum and so forth). Fundamental to this explicitation process is how their lived experiences as children, learners and students spill over into their practices as teachers.

#### **5.4 Anticipatory interpretive narrative – drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s ‘lived body theory’**

The anticipatory interpretive narrative brings out the deeper meaning of lived experience implicit in both the descriptive and interpretive narratives. Merging these two descriptions provides insight into the core of a teacher’s existence and how he or she gets a grip on reality, given the super-complex world in which they find themselves. It brings out the meaning behind a person’s inescapable experiences by focusing on the ‘enabling conditions’ that shape a person’s behaviour as a way of coping in the midst of adversities and how these adversities shape their becoming. From this perspective Dall’Alba (2009) points out how important it is to be aware of and understand the influence of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century world on teachers and learners. He describes the 21<sup>st</sup>-century’s dynamics as complex and ambiguous. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) constantly criticised the view that a person’s intellectualist account or knowledge of objects is superficial in nature, because it is the deeper issues of coping in the world that shape our actions, reactions and behaviour. True meaning can only be arrived at by looking deeper into a person’s experiences. This ‘looking deeper into experience’ is predicated on what Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) terms ‘conditions of existence’, which indicates the effects of the ‘enabling conditions’ that could lead to an array of different possibilities of embodiment. What Merleau-Ponty argues for is elucidation of the relationship between person and world, mind and body – that in his view exists pre-conceptually and pre-linguistically. In other words, perception is not found in thinking or based on the views of others, but in ‘embodied knowledge’. He separates the intellectualist account by drawing a dividing line between a real experience and the knowledge that flows from such experiences

and events and being detached from reality as a subject, which leads to distorted understanding.

Based on this premise, he contends that beneath each person's existence there is a connection between the body, the world (space) and time. The merging of these three aspects shapes a person's becoming and/or unbecoming. This happens when practical events and experiences from the past could lay hold from a distance, upon a person's future. In other words, the anticipatory interpretive narrative unveiled these definite and significant events of the Accounting teachers' past that surface in the present and future as a historicity or historicity, which in turn affects their decision making. More specifically, it explains their mindset (that is, why they think in a specific way) and how and why they engage with the world. With respect to teaching, the anticipatory interpretive narrative can be used to explain why they engage with the content, curriculum and learners in a particular manner.

The sections that follow present the data for each research participant in four broad themes, namely,

- Their experiences during childhood up until their initial teacher education (part one of the interview);
- How they experience their professional context (lived space) (part two of the interview);
- How they experience the various changes in the curriculum over the last two decades and its impact on their disposition towards the curriculum (part two of the interview); and
- What drives the Accounting teachers to remain in the teaching profession? (part two of the interview).

## 5.5 Research participant: Abigail

### 5.5.1 Part one of the interview

#### a) Constructing the constituent profile

When I got to Abigail's school (School A) she welcomed me with an affectionate smile. *Good day Karen, I am looking forward to the interview with you because I have a lot to say,*<sup>10</sup> she said. Her body language was relaxed, displaying a warm confidence and calmness with which she drew me into her world and presence. She then took me to the interview venue and as I was getting my audio-recorder ready, taking out my interview schedule and a notepad for field notes, she casually said, *I feel privileged to be part of this study.* As an introduction to the interview, I asked her to tell me more about her childhood experiences, that is, where she grew up, her family and her schooling. Smilingly she said, *<sup>1/</sup>you are reminding me of the good times now. <sup>2/</sup>I grew up in Barrydale, a very small town in between Ladysmith and Montague and I must admit those were the good times.* The smile on her face gave me the impression that she was re-living some fond memories of that time. She continued:

*<sup>3/</sup>I attended school there, it was a farm school and my father was the principal. We were nine children and <sup>4/</sup>all nine of us attended school there. However, the school only went to Grade 6, and from there we went to Zoar, where all of us completed our Grade 7 and 8, after which we went to Môrester High School in Oudtshoorn, which started from Grade 9 until Grade 12. There I completed the remainder of my schooling.*

While she was narrating her childhood experiences she came across as very relaxed – sitting with her arms resting on her thighs and her legs positioned square on the floor. Then she started to tell me more about her community and her father:

*We grew up in a <sup>5/</sup>very poor community, but they were <sup>6/</sup>wonderful people with strong values. Both my mother and father were teachers. <sup>7/</sup>They [the community] had a lot of respect for my father, he was seen by them not only*

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<sup>10</sup> Note: As from section 5.5 to 5.9 in this chapter all words, phrases and/or sentences in *italics* are the direct words of the research participants, that is, Abigail's, Bryan's, Claire's, Deidre's and Edward's.

*as the principal, but also as the policeman, reverend, councillor and everything else that you can think of. So <sup>8/</sup>we had to constantly remind ourselves of whose children we were when we left home. <sup>9/</sup>My father taught me the importance of punctuality, how to act in public, and to respect people all the time, while my mother taught me most of what I know today.*

Regarding her Accounting teacher she had the following to say:

*... oh, <sup>10/</sup>she was a very strict teacher and very good at what she was doing. During that time <sup>11/</sup>corporal punishment was still administered and she did just that to deal with difficult learners. <sup>12/</sup>I think it helped us to stay focused as it made us better learners that forced us to know our work. When you misbehave you were immediately dealt with. She was just like that when she was teaching. You had to know your work, when she asked you a question. <sup>13/</sup>It was very different to the way we are teaching today. <sup>14/</sup>There was no use of media, such as, data projectors, computers, and so forth, but she was still <sup>15/</sup>very passionate about her work. <sup>16/</sup>There was also no need for applications that you had to make with the real world as these different curricula wanted us to do. But there we worked and understood the content very well because <sup>17/</sup>we wrote a lot of tests and examinations. <sup>18/</sup>This is also something that we don't do today anymore because it is assignments and projects with rubrics. But we must understand that the world is changing and we must also do so, but I must say <sup>19/</sup>it is very difficult for me and the older teachers to change.*

When asked why she decided to become an Accounting teacher she said:

*<sup>20/</sup>I can think of three major influences, these were my father, my Accounting teacher, and my older sister. <sup>21/</sup>I think of all these three, my older sister was the biggest influence. She was an Accounting teacher and she urged me to become one as well. When I was in Grade 12 she taught Accounting at the school where I was and that was when I decided to become an Accounting teacher. <sup>22/</sup>So in 1979 after I matriculated I enrolled at the Peninsula Technikon and majored in Accounting, Economics, Business Economics and Typing. <sup>23/</sup>Five of the nine of us became teachers, so all of this contributed to my decision as well.*

To zoom in on her training as a commerce teacher, I was interested in the formal tuition she received. For example, the NQF level, the teaching methods of the lecturers and whether she thought the teacher training programme prepared them adequately to teach Accounting at high school. She replied:

<sup>24/</sup>*The first two years were very easy, but the third year was extremely difficult for me. This I say because* <sup>25/</sup>*I failed Accounting in my third year.* <sup>26/</sup>*The training we received was at a high level because in my third year we did the whole Grade 12 Accounting syllabus [NQF level 4] so we could teach Grade 12 even after we finished our training.* <sup>27/</sup>*The methods the lecturers used were very theoretical, kind of like - here's the work, here's the textbook and this is how you learn. You read it, remember it and try to understand it.* <sup>28/</sup>*Because the examinations will demand that you give the answers that is in textbooks. I must admit* <sup>29/</sup>*these were good lecturers, because they knew their work.*

I coded 29 statements with key phrases from the data in the first part of the interview which revealed various NUMs. These NUMs formed the basis of the descriptive narrative of Abigail's lifeworld, which is presented in the next section. Each statement was numbered and should be read as P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>29</sub> (P<sub>1</sub> refers to part one of the interview; while A<sub>1</sub> refers to Abigail's statement one; and A<sub>29</sub> refers to Abigail's statement twenty-nine).

Since the transcript elucidates three different categories or levels of analysis, this was done to avoid repetition. In other words, it was used as a referencing system to craft the descriptive narrative, the interpretive narrative and the anticipatory interpretive narrative of both sections of the interview for each research participant.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

Central to Abigail's lifeworld are two elements, namely, (i) the experiential world in which finds herself that shaped her perception or intuition, and (ii) her world as a whole or the fullness of her experiences which encompasses the multiplicity of her particular world (Barnacle, 2004). Abigail draws a lot of attention to her childhood, which she describes as *the good times* (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>1</sub>) of her life. She is very

proud of her community and stated that *they* (community) *had strong values and we had to respect them*. She was raised in a family of nine children, five of whom became teachers. Her father was the principal of a farm school which she attended from Grades 1 to 6. She is particularly fond of her parents and views them as her role models. She said ... *my father was a very strict man... and he taught the importance of being punctual*. What I know today *most of it my mother taught me...*, she exclaimed. Her description of her family life can be assumed to be that of a very close-knit family with strong family values, given her body language, such as the constant smile on her face when she talks about them and a 'longing' look, wishing that she can re-live those moments. She attended three different schools at three different phases of her life. She explains, the first school she attended where her father was the principal only *went to Grade 6, and from there we went to Zoar, where all of us completed our Grade 7 and 8, after which we went to Môrester High school in Oudtshoorn, which started from Grade 9 until Grade 12 There I completed the remainder of my schooling* (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>2-4</sub>). When we then discussed her Accounting teacher, she pointed out that she (her teacher) was *very good and passionate about her work* and, most importantly, *she was very strict ... she even administered corporal punishment*. She further said, *I think it [corporal punishment] worked... as it made us better learners that forced us to know our work*. This signifies that her teacher dominated her world with angst. She continued to explain that her teacher used an authoritative pedagogy with little consideration given to context or even the use of teaching media and added that they had to write a lot of tests and examinations, *which is different from how we teach today* (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>10-17</sub>).

Then there is the powerful influence of her older sister, who is a few years older than her and whom, she points out, was the main motivation behind her decision to become an Accounting teacher. After she finally decided to become an Accounting teacher, she enrolled for her teaching qualification at the then Peninsula Technikon in 1979, where she majored in Accounting, Economics, Business Economics and Typing. She describes the first two years of her training as *very easy*, but it became more complicated in her third year, which she had to repeat. Looking back she said, *I had good lecturers ... and they knew their work*.

When asked to explain how they taught the subject (Accounting) she said: *The methods the lecturers used were very theoretical, for example, here's the work, here's the textbook, and this is how you learn. You read it, remember it and try to understand it* (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>24-29</sub>). Similar to the way she described her Accounting school teacher as good and efficient at her work, she also describes her lecturers, who followed the same teaching style, as efficient.

These intertwined descriptions of her experiences form what Husserl (1983) refers to as 'the things in themselves'. What emerged from her story is that her consciousness or mindset was shaped by powerful voices around her at a young age. These voices refer to those of her parents, teachers, community members, older sister and so forth. The object of Abigail's consciousness is not what Descartes (2003) refers to as 'I think, therefore I am', but rather 'they (parents, teachers and sister) constructed my world, therefore I am'. Her story or lifeworld as a child is as if she finds herself in an immanent plane of power and control which Husserl argues shaped the *ego cogito* of her being which is reflected in her story. For example, childhood experiences, family life, school career and university training as an Accounting teacher became the legitimate basis of how she views the world. There is no doubt that her experiences as both a learner (school) and student (tertiary institution) of Accounting as revealed in her story formed the essence of her perception of how Accounting should be taught. This is substantiated when she says *she* (her Accounting teacher) *was a great teacher*, although she did not use any media, and *they were great lecturers*, although they were textbook-bound and used an examination or objectives-driven teaching style.

One might wonder why she describes the authoritative, dry and dogmatic teaching styles of her teacher and lecturers as *good teaching and lecturing methods*, without in some sense assessing its cognitive value to her life. For example, today she is expected to teach Accounting within a real-life setting or using phenomena that a learner can relate to in order to make sense of the information. In her experience as a student this was not the case; instead they were handed down ready-made knowledge – a world of concepts and formulas that she had to

remember for examination purposes without much emphasis on understanding the content.

c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Drawing on Van Manen (1990), I want to transform her lived experiences into textual expressions of its essence to craft something meaningful to which others can relate. In other words, the descriptive text provides a space for interpretation or what Barone (2001, p, 150) terms “a degree of interpretive space”. This space allows me to consider reflexively Abigail’s lived experiences and learn something meaningful from them. Heidegger’s (1927/1967) *Dasein* provides the theoretical basis to reflect on Abigail’s upbringing, schooling, the role her Accounting teacher played in her life, and the influence of her parents and older sister on her choice of career. *Dasein* provides insights into the hidden aspects of these phenomena that need to be unveiled and interpreted. In other words, the focus here is on what Abigail is attempting to make us aware of in her life during this phase. To do this, I will have to elicit, evoke and uncover what lies beneath or buried in and around these phenomena that manifest in her life. Thus the focus in this interpretive narrative is on digging underneath the meta-narratives that reflect her mainstream ideologies, prejudices and assumptions. So, what can we learn from Abigail’s story?

Abigail’s story sheds light on the broader society in which she was raised, its rich social, cultural, ideological and historical traditions and conditions in which her parents were raised and that have now also become her way of life. This way of life represents a discourse of power and control on her young life that also discursively shaped her into becoming an Accounting teacher which she describes as ‘a choice by default’. When Koopman (2017) describes his upbringing and the influence that his parents and the larger community had on his life, he draws from Nietzsche’s Zarathustra and views it (the mindset of parents and the community) as a historical sickness that our elders introduce into our lives in order for us to become who they want us to become. He writes:



The reason parents impose this heritage on their children is to conserve the past by duplicating themselves in their children. Nietzsche (1968) argues that one's sense of right or wrong is psychologically induced in the subconscious mind by the strong and powerful in a society which, in my case, was my parents. These values, in turn, are predetermined by the parents. This Nietzsche calls a 'historical sickness' which attacks and shapes the essence of the child. In this manner, parents narrow the child's horizon and outlook on life, which marks the start of a constrained process of becoming in which the child is quickly trapped ... (Koopman, 2017, p. 52).

Abigail's story is a mirror image or reflection of Koopman's description in the above quote. This alludes to issues of 'power' and 'control' which shaped his and her becoming as well (refer P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>8,9,10,20</sub>). Abigail mentioned how they were constantly reminded to respect others and even more so her teachers. These were the values ubiquitous in the society in which she grew up. This is summarized in her statement, *very poor community ... wonderful people with strong values* (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>5-6</sub>). There appears to be a network of power that circulates in and around her from which she cannot escape and which forms her perception of the world and the essence of her being. Our *Dasein*, Heidegger (1927/1967) argues, refers to our existence in relation to others. *Dasein* therefore zooms in on our actions and behaviour of being-in-the-world and how it is different from that of others. Abigail's story is one of a person who blends in with the demands of societal rules, that is, someone who reflects Heidegger's ready-at-hand (ready-to-handle) principle. In other words, she did not think about or evaluate the predominant culture in her household, the broader community, and the way she was taught Accounting at school; instead she just swam with the stream and blended into society, without questioning the impact it might have on her choice of being. This discourse of power and control is reflected in her transcript when she used the phrase 'strict' or connotations thereof in different contexts, that is, *my father was the principal ... we were raised very strictly... my teacher was strict*. She continued, *when you step out of line in class, she would put her foot down and administer corporal punishment ... I think it worked*. All these statements

accentuate how her subjectivity was strategically inhabited by all the layered voices that steered her becoming.

According to Koopman (2017), the way a child is raised can have a backwash effect on their school career and later parts of life. He writes:

This happens because our teachers create and instil inexplicable states of consciousness characterized by fear, vilification, illogical trains of thought and other phobias into our minds. For example, learners who did not perform well in a test or could not answer questions in class or were absent from school or misbehaved or showed signs of opposition to the prevailing traditions in class and at school – such learners were flogged with a cane in class or sent to the principal's office for more severe forms of punishment (Koopman, 2017, p. 54).

Abigail's story as a learner in the Accounting classroom is almost identical to the one described in the above citation, in which she experienced the same classroom conditions. All of this points to an authoritative pedagogy of power and control that does not foster learning but rather instils anxiety. In such a case angst about failure becomes the main motivation for learning. Instead of learning for understanding, learners memorise the work just to escape the humiliation and threats of their teachers. How this affects the way she teaches Accounting, connects with her learners, and engages with the curriculum will be discussed in part two of the interview of the data explication process (section 5.5.2).

#### d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

For Merleau-Ponty the notion of *Dasein* (being there) takes on a 'whole new' trajectory. For him our existence, or what Heidegger terms a person's *Dasein*, takes into consideration the essence of the mediating factors of experience that continually lead to a modification of the self (Rabil, 1967). To map out Abigail's anticipatory interpretive narrative, I had to accentuate and articulate the conditions in which she finds herself submerged on a daily basis. These conditions in which she was raised and lives, Merleau-Ponty refers to as the 'enabling conditions' or 'conditions of existence' that should be detached from an intellectualist account and the analyst should focus solely on being or *Dasein* in a given time and space.

These ‘conditions of existence’ will eventually form the person’s phenomenal field or perceptual experiences that shape his or her consciousness. This means the world – or in Abigail’s case, the influence of her immediate space – has a direct bearing on how one copes with reality on a daily basis. Merleau-Ponty’s view of *Dasein* is how *a priori* or *ahistorical* events shape, anticipate or steer Abigail’s body in the directions that the voices of the people close to her want her to go (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>8,9,10,12,19,21</sub>). These voices represent what Merleau-Ponty terms ‘purity of sensation’ as a unit of experience (1945/1962, p. 3). Merleau-Ponty argues that a person’s knowledge develops within the pre-noetic background of the lived world embracing embodied and social practices as well as the objective world of perceptions and cognitions (1945/1962). Therefore as humans we live in two dimensions in this world, namely, one that is created by our relationship with this world that are embodied in experience, and the other created by our relationships within a social context. These two dimensions co-exist and constitute the experience of the wholeness of the person. This means that every experience is both individually embodied and socially constructed. Based on this premise, it is fair to infer that the voices of her parents, older sister, Accounting teacher and lecturers can be viewed as the landscape that coded her world. Consequently, her body and mind were receptive to their views, which can be seen as a spatial configuration that in-dwells her world. These voices (or ‘enabling conditions’) are transposed in her consciousness and form the ‘intentional arc’ in order to cope with the world, or to get a ‘maximum grip’ on reality. The ‘intentional arc’ represents the epistemic life and perceptual life that project our past around us. In Merleau-Ponty’s view, the way a person copes with his or her everyday reality is rooted in society’s dominant cultures, ideologies and beliefs (1945/1962).

Abigail’s story reflects the significantly powerful influence of others (with respect to the immediate rich traditions that shaped her upbringing, that is, her home, the community and the school in which she spent most of her early years) that she experiences in her world that simultaneously respond with immediate meaning and contextual presence. For example, the strong and powerful voice of her father constantly echoes through her mind and she always has to be aware of whose child she is; also, her teacher’s voice about what is important when learning

Accounting. In addition, there is the voice of her older sister, who was the main inspiration or motivation behind her decision to become an Accounting teacher, and the voices of others, such as, her mother and family about how she should behave in public. Morris (2008, p. 111) endorses Merleau-Ponty's view when he states that "the lived body is one's intentional opening to the world, through which alone one experiences meaningful things in the first place". Therefore, the way Abigail currently copes in the world represents a non-propositional, non-conceptual and primordial account of her openness to the world in which she lived as a child. Part of her coping or way of surviving is psychologically induced by her refusal to allow her body to connect with an ambiguous and open world. Instead she accepts and inhabits a pre-determined or reduced world, created by all these voices. Then there is the community, which she describes as having had strong values and children had to respect their elders and those in the community. Also, she describes her Accounting teacher as being *good at her work* and *passionate at what she is doing* ... her ... *lecturers were good at their work*. This raises the question: How does Abigail internalise these strictures?

Firstly, the theory of the body in the world is already a theory of perception derived from the various conditions of existence (home, community and school, and so forth) in which she finds herself. This means that her own awareness of how the world works and operates was slowly re-coded by all the different rules laid out for her on a daily bases. These rules are immediately synonymous with a certain perception of her body which was made explicit in the language of external perception (actions and behaviour). This means her world is given new meaning in which she steers her body's physiological and neurological connectedness with the world. In other words, her body moves around in the world until she finds an appropriate rhythm, or what Merleau-Ponty terms the 'right body set' for taking in the things around her either as a whole or as different parts to get the best grip on reality. This statement is corroborated when she stated that she abandoned her own common sense and *ended up by default in the teaching profession*. She landed up in the teaching profession, because the world had already been laid out for her and all she needs to do now is to swim with the stream. When this happens the environment colonises her existence and thought

processes, because her conditions of existence re-orientate (take hold of) her body in the world, which also forms the essence of her perceptive knowledge. Thus this colonisation of the body becomes the anticipation with which she thinks and acts in the world.

Anticipation can be described as the essence of her existence that is shaped, controlled and constructed by the rules that govern her thinking. Abigail's world is significantly influenced by all the role players (parents, sister, teacher, lecturers, and so forth) which, similar to a magnetic field, represent a normative force that steers her onto a path already set out for her present and future life. As she divulges her story, there appears to be a disconnect between the self and who she was as a child. Merleau-Ponty (1968) describes this disconnect as a sort of crypto-mechanical dialect in which perception hides itself from itself as some kind of essence that consciousness brings into the present. For example, she relegates the world of others above her own personal world when she says, *my mother taught me most of what I know today ... her teacher was very strict and she dealt with them harshly when they overstepped*. Furthermore, she stated that she became a teacher because *my older sister inspired me and I ended up in teaching by default*. In part two of the interview, the anticipatory narrative underscores how these 'conditions of existence' imparted in her early years resonate with her role as an Accounting teacher and how she copes in the context within which she works.

#### 5.5.2 Part two of the interview

##### a) Constructing the constituent profile

The first part of the interview with Abigail, which focused mainly on her experiences as a child, her educational training at both high school and at the tertiary institution, and more importantly why she decided to become an Accounting teacher, served as a prelude to her professional journey as an Accounting teacher. To arrive at an understanding of her professional journey, the second part of the interview focused mainly on how she experiences her professional context (lived space), and how she experiences the Accounting

curriculum. From this perspective the focus is on her challenges, concerns, frustrations and her active engagement with the Accounting curriculum.

I started by asking Abigail to give a brief synopsis of her teaching career, that is, where and how she started out in her first post until she ended up at her current school (School A). She said:

*<sup>1/</sup>My first teaching post was at Heideveld High where I was appointed as a Business Studies and Economics teacher. <sup>2/</sup>I stayed there for a year because I did not like it there - because I did not like teaching these subjects. <sup>3/</sup>But Accounting posts were scarce so I had to take it. <sup>4/</sup>A year later I left and moved to Robertson, where I taught at Langeberg High and taught Accounting to Grades 8 and 9... Here I stayed for three years. <sup>5/</sup>From there I moved to School A where I am now teaching for thirty years. <sup>6/</sup>When I was appointed here at School A in 1987, I was also the HOD and still have that same portfolio thirty years later.*

When asked how she experienced the first few years of teaching, she replied:

*<sup>7/</sup>I just had to find my own way and apply what I learned at college. <sup>8/</sup>But you know we had such good lecturers and <sup>9/</sup>we had such good experiences with the practical teaching that helped a lot. <sup>10/</sup>I think my lecturers at Pen Tech prepared us very well, because they drilled us. <sup>11/</sup>Therefore we came with a mature attitude of preparedness that was ready to teach. <sup>12/</sup>So although I did not have a mentor at these two schools, I knew what was expected and delivered good service. <sup>13/</sup>There were some things that everyone learned on the job, but that is what teaching is all about ... nobody knows everything...*

*<sup>14/</sup>At Pen Tech we had in-house teaching practice. It was a very good system to prepare us well. That was apart from teaching practice that took place at schools. <sup>15/</sup>So by the time we started as qualified teachers we already had a lot of experience in teaching. Therefore <sup>16/</sup>I was not afraid to teach in the schools and did not need a mentor. <sup>17/</sup>I think that Pen Tech had very good teachers that trained us for careers in teaching ...*

On the question regarding furthering her qualifications, she said:

<sup>18/</sup>*After completing my three-year-long diploma in commerce in 1982, I returned to Pen Tech to further my studies and enrolled for a one-year-long Further Diploma in Commerce. This was also one of the reasons I left Langeberg High and moved to Cape Town in 1985. Lucky for me I also got the job at School A. <sup>19/</sup>I needed to develop myself. <sup>20/</sup>Then, twenty-five years later, I enrolled for my BEd (Hons) at Pen Tech and completed it two years later. But before that, in 2007, I also did an ACE in CAT [Advanced Certificate in Education: Computers Application Technology]. As you can see I am very much a true Pen Tech alumni, because I did all my qualifications there. Doing my Honours was hectic but <sup>21/</sup>it is important to empower yourself. <sup>22/</sup>I did not get relief or support from my school to further my studies and just had to work.*

When asked to describe how she experienced the teaching of Accounting under apartheid in the 1980s and early 1990s compared to the post-apartheid period, she said:

<sup>23/</sup>*Today the classes are not so big because not many learners choose Accounting, so <sup>24/</sup>it is more manageable compared to when I started out. <sup>25/</sup>Under apartheid the number of learners at the school was more and therefore we had much bigger classes. <sup>26/</sup>It is also a different type of child today, we have black and coloured learners in the same class and have to teach with this in mind. Therefore we have an English class and an Afrikaans class, <sup>27/</sup>you need to get them through the grade. So the responsibility is more on you today. <sup>28/</sup>I also think we work much harder now compared to back then, because we must think for these learners, they don't want to think.*

<sup>29/</sup>*Today, the small numbers in Grade 10 has a lot to do with the Grade 9 EMS teacher. Often you don't get good teachers in Grade 9, so <sup>30/</sup>they just choose anybody to teach the subject, which discourages the learners to choose Accounting in Grade 10. <sup>31/</sup>What I do as the HOD to increase the number of learners in the FET Band is to bring in private companies and firms to come and speak to the learners in Grade 9 before they make their*

choice. <sup>32/</sup>*I think this is the main reason for my large numbers in Grade 10, before then very few learners chose to do Accounting.*

When asked to explain how the inadequate preparation of Grade 9 learners affects her teaching, she said:

<sup>33/</sup>*What makes my work difficult are these four-day EMS teachers. This is teachers who get a four-day workshop from the Department to teach Accounting.* <sup>34/</sup>*What we had to learn in four years to teach Accounting they learn in four days. This is a crash course the Department offers and anybody can attend.* <sup>35/</sup>*After four days you are allowed to teach EMS, and because they are not confident with Accounting they ignore most of it in Grade 9.* <sup>36/</sup>*Therefore I have to start all over with the basics in Grade 10.* <sup>37/</sup>*I use the whole first term to catch up and to lay the foundation for the learners. This is frustrating but not so bad because I do it anyway.*

Give me an example of how you teach the content to them, I asked:

<sup>38/</sup>*Your Accounting Equation is your basis of understanding Accounting.* <sup>39/</sup>*You must see that your learners understand the Accounting Equation,* <sup>40/</sup>*otherwise, you won't be able to move on. So you have to see to it that your learners know this. Yes, it is the basis.* <sup>41/</sup>*So when I see that the learners are struggling with posting to the ledger, I will go over the Accounting Equation.* <sup>42/</sup>*It is pasted up – huge - in my classroom. When you walk into my classroom you will also see posters of the General Ledger on the wall. I will refer my learners to the posters regularly.*

<sup>43/</sup>*They must know their basics. So the basics are your assets, your liabilities, if they understand what that is and they can see and memorise that, they can understand the concept of assets, liabilities, if they understand that, then it makes your performance much better, so I first see to that.* <sup>44/</sup>*Although our school is not so well resourced, I try to use a lot of technology in the classroom.* <sup>45/</sup>*When I did the ACE course in 2007 in CAT I learned how to use the computer in my classroom,* <sup>46/</sup>*so I use Microsoft, PowerPoint and Excel, and demonstrate it to my learners via a data projector.* <sup>47/</sup>*I have my templates on my laptop.* <sup>48/</sup>*Say, for instance, the Income Statement, it is a blank one, I will use my white board marker and I*



*will write on the line on the screen. That works for me. <sup>49/</sup>I also, if I have time, I help them, I do the rules, I tell them the rules, [and sometimes] I want them just to look at a certain copy [blank template]. <sup>50/</sup>I will [also] download the video and I will play the video. It is sometimes good to have somebody else in the classroom [person in the video].*

When asked about support from her school management and the WCED, she lamented:

*<sup>51/</sup>We don't get a lot of support from the principal. His attitude is not very good. <sup>52/</sup>If you need stationery, you must buy it yourself, even photocopy paper you must pay for it from your own pocket. <sup>53/</sup>This is very frustrating [smiling] but what can you do? <sup>54/</sup>The WCED, on the other hand, does not even know what goes in our school, nor do they know anything about the classroom practice, you hardly see them in the year. The only time you see them is during cluster meetings and at the end of the year when you must submit your marks. Other than that they are missing.*

When asked to comment on the training they received from the WCED in preparation for the CAPS, she said with frustration:

*<sup>55/</sup>We just found it boring. The reason why I say that, <sup>56/</sup>they divide you in groups ... they still have to work out the problems and that to me ... that was too much. Just come to me and say this is how we should do it and, this is the new work, don't you decide what the curriculum must be, and then we must tell you how to do it. <sup>57/</sup>I just found that very tiring, you are so loaded with work, and then you have to do those classes after school, we had to think all these things and then we had to present it. So, for me ... it was very boring.*

When asked to give her views on the apartheid NATED Report 550, the NCS and the CAPS, she reported:

*<sup>58/</sup>I think the old curriculum [NATED Report 550] was much easier to work with as it was more focused and well structured. I prefer that one. <sup>59/</sup>These new curricula are too confusing and it always changes. <sup>60/</sup>Back then it was to the point and you knew how to prepare your learners for examinations. <sup>61/</sup>The child could choose between Higher Grade and Standard Grade,*

<sup>62/</sup>*although it was challenging to have both grades in the same class.* <sup>63/</sup>*But today with the NCS and the CAPS, now you must teach the child about the world with all these different skills in mind. This makes you to drift away from the topic sometimes.* <sup>64/</sup>*Every day I can see they [learners] can't cope with all the work.* <sup>65/</sup>*It is too much work that is unnecessary.* <sup>66/</sup>*The focus is more on ethics today. For example, one topic in our syllabus is Bank Reconciliation.* <sup>67/</sup>*This topic focuses on corruption, discipline and control, and this is just one aspect that we must elaborate on.* <sup>68/</sup>*Back then we knew we must not steal or act corruptly,* <sup>69/</sup>*now we must teach them ... how unnecessary! This curriculum just gives us more work...* <sup>70/</sup>*The children are also very lazy to think,* <sup>71/</sup>*but I think not even the Higher Grade back then was as difficult as the NCS and the CAPS.*

To my final question on whether she still thinks this is the right profession of her, she replied enthusiastically:

<sup>72/</sup>*Definitely! I have a passion for this subject. If I can have my choices over, I would choose this again. I feel ... fulfilled. I absolutely enjoy teaching this subject. I do not want to do anything else.*

In the construction of the constituent profile, I identified 72 NUMs, labelled as P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>72</sub>. The P<sub>2</sub> refers to the second part of the interview, after which each code follows chronologically ranging from 1 to 72. These codes will now be used to craft the descriptive narrative below as well as the interpretive narrative and anticipatory interpretive narrative, which follow below.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

In the construction of the Husserlian descriptive narrative the following themes emerged from Abigail's constituent profile to distil the essence of her experiences: (i) the impact of her training as a pre-service Accounting teacher on her perception as a teacher; (ii) the challenges and apprehension she experiences in teaching Accounting; (iii) her views about her principal and the district offices regarding support to teach the content effectively; and (iv) her perceptions of the latest CAPS and all its predecessor curricula in post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

Abigail received her training as an Accounting teacher at the then Peninsula Technikon, where she first enrolled to pursue a career in teaching and completed her three-year Teacher's Diploma in Commerce (TDC). After qualifying to be an Accounting teacher, and three years' experience as a commerce teacher, she enrolled for a one-year Further Diploma in Education: Commerce (FDE: Comm) at Peninsula Technikon, which she completed in that same year. Her 34-year-long career as a commerce teacher (at the time of the interview) started in Heideveld, approximately 15 km away from the CBD of Cape Town, teaching Business Studies and Economics for a year. The area of the school where she taught was designated as a coloured neighbourhood for only coloured children in terms of the Group Areas Act of 1950.<sup>11</sup> She stated that during that period (in the 1980s) Accounting posts were scarce and she was forced to accept the post to teach Business Studies and Economics, although she did not like teaching these subjects. Her dislike for teaching these subjects motivated her to move to Langeberg High school in Robertson, where she taught Accounting to Grades 8 and 9 for three years. Back then Robertson was a small '*plaas dorpie*' (small rural town, approximately 150 km from Cape Town) similar to the town in which she grew up. Three years later she moved back to the city and took up a position as HOD at School A, a position she still held at the time of the interview. The move to School A allowed her to complete her one year FDE: Comm which she describes as a form of 'empowerment' (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>4-5</sub>).

When she started out as a qualified teacher she commented that the good and effective training that she had experienced as a pre-service teacher benefitted her tremendously. She said *we had such good lecturers and we had such good experiences with the practical teaching...* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>7-9</sub>). She continued to explain how the lecturers prepared them for teaching Accounting (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>10-12</sub>).

Drawing on Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory', the above citation underscores the object of her consciousness with regards to the impact and influence of her lecturers, intuitive experiences and the experienceable world of teaching practice

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<sup>11</sup> Group Areas Act of 1950: The South African government passed the Group Areas Act on 27 April 1950. This Act enforced the segregation of the different races to specific areas within the urban locale. It also restricted ownership and occupation of land to specific statutory groups.

in the development of her professional life and how her journey started out. By so doing, she highlights how good and effective training can create confidence and develop competence as an Accounting teacher. This statement is substantiated when she used the words *my lecturers prepared us very well because they drilled us* and *I knew what was expected and delivered the goods*. These statements also give meaning to the essential structure of what she considers to be the key criteria in the preparation of effective Accounting teachers. For example, the word ‘drill’ represents a structured world that is the same for each and every person, which means the content is delivered in a particular way. Drawing from my own experiences as an Accounting teacher, due to the nature of the subject, ‘drilling’ is an effective way of teaching Accounting as most concepts and principles are outside of the lived world of learners and this involves a lot of repetition to consolidate a good understanding. On the other hand, it is also difficult for an individual to discover or construct his or her own meaningful formulation of the content when drilled to perform a particular task. According to Aoki (2005), when teachers understand a curriculum, they learn to question the basic tenants of why they do what they do in the classroom. This does not emerge from Abigail’s account of her experiences, because she feels satisfied (uncritically so) with the way she was trained as a teacher.

In my view, it is fair to assume that Abigail is also well qualified as an Accounting teacher, given the fact that she was raised in a family in which both parents were teachers and two of her siblings also became teachers before she entered the profession herself. She holds an Honours degree and an Advanced Certificate of Education in Computers Application Technology (ACE: CAT). The combination of these qualifications assisted her well in her methodological approaches to teaching. The ACE: CAT qualification especially assisted her well in integrating technology into her lessons in order to deliver the content. The following excerpt confirms this: *When I did the ACE course in 2007 in CAT I learned how to use the computer in my classroom, so I use Microsoft, PowerPoint, and Excel and demonstrate it to my learners via a data projector...* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>45-47</sub>). Although she points out that she uses technology in the delivery of her lessons subconsciously, she does not seem to believe that technology promotes

effective learning in Accounting. This is captured in her response when she was asked to give more detail on how she delivers the content to her learners. She referred to three salient points, namely, (i) knowing (not understanding) the Accounting Equation, (ii) memorizing the Accounting Equation, and (iii) she tells them what the rules are and how they work, as opposed to investigating the origins of these rules so that her learners can have a thorough understanding of each concept that makes up the rules. This is captured in the following three statements: *Your Accounting Equation is your basis of understanding Accounting* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>38</sub>)... *It is pasted up – huge - in my classroom* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>42</sub>) ... *they can see and memorise that...* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>43</sub>) *and I tell them the rules* (P<sub>42</sub>A<sub>49</sub>). Her method of teaching seems to have a lot in common with the way she was taught Accounting by her teacher and lecturers. This implies that her pedagogical strategy is situated within the traditional teaching approach, although infused with the use of technology in some way. According to West and Saunders (2006), it is not presumptuous to say that this method or approach to teaching dominates the teaching and learning of Accounting. They argue that this happens because the technical core content of the subject is derived from the South African Institute of Chartered Accounting, making the subject devoid of lived experience from the learners' perspective. Also, they argue that for a subject like Accounting such a method is not necessarily a bad thing, because learning Accounting involves the practice of constant repetition which amounts to drilling the learners. For this reason, an Accounting lesson involves a lot of explaining of complex technical terminology and concepts followed by a number of examples in order to show the learners how these concepts are applied in the field. Hence, Abigail does not incorporate the lived world experiences of the learners in the Accounting classroom.

She asserts that her main challenges, concerns and uncertainties in the teaching of Accounting are: (i) the fact that the classroom has become more culturally diverse; (ii) the teacher is more accountable if learners fail; (iii) the poor preparation of the learners in the General Education and Training Band (Grades 8 and 9); and (iv) poor/no support from management and the WCED to facilitate effective teaching. The following statements corroborate these claims: *It is also a*

*different type of child today, we have black and coloured learners in the same class and have to teach with this in mind... (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>26</sub>). She further said ... you need to get them through the grade. So the responsibility is more on you today (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>27</sub>). Concerning the learners' attitude towards their own learning, she said ...we must think for these learners, they don't want to think (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>28</sub>). One of the main challenges she faces is the unqualified teachers in the GET Band. From this perspective, she lamented: ... often you don't get good teachers in Grade 9 ... they just choose anybody to teach the subject, which discourages the learners to choose Accounting in Grade 10 (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>29-30</sub>).*

Concerning support, Abigail pointed out how unsupportive the principal is in assisting them with even the bare minimum requirements for effective classroom practice. She lamented how they have to provide and pay – personally – for writing and printing material. She also painted a negative picture of the local district office, of how invisible they are throughout the year and that they are only present when they have to comply with assessment policies and practices during cluster meetings and marks submission at the end of the year. She gives the impression that more emphasis is placed on the need for results and not so much on what happens in the Accounting classroom. This is corroborated by the following statement: ... they [WCED] don't even know what is happening in the classroom. Concerning training offered by the local district offices in preparation for the implementation of the CAPS, she repeated how poorly planned and inadequate it was as it was a complete *waste of time*. She said *we just found it boring*. Furthermore, she said that what was lacking were effective methodological approaches on how to implement the new CAPS. This statement is confirmed by: *Just come to me and say this is how we should do it and, this is the new work*. She also raised concerns about the timing of the workshops, as they were offered after school when she was already exhausted after a long and eventful day at school. The excerpt labelled P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>57</sub> reflects this statement:

Abigail also expressed strong negative sentiments about the NCS and the CAPS with their focus on child-centredness. In her view most of the content prescribed in the CAPS is unnecessary and is therefore a distraction from effective teaching

of the content. This is corroborated in the following excerpt: ... *you must teach the child about the world with all these different skills in mind ... This makes you drift away from topics* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>63</sub>). She then explained how learners struggle with all of the work, because it is simply too much work for them to cope with. She also pointed out that the learners are too lazy to think and that she must supply many of the answers to questions. In her view the Accounting curriculum is too prescriptive and overloaded. Some of the content prescribed in the CAPS does not apply to the subject and belongs in other subjects. For example, she expressed deep frustration concerning the strong focus on ethics in Accounting. She feels it is not her duty/role to teach children ethical values. To confirm this statement she said ... *one topic in our syllabus is Bank Reconciliation. This topic focuses on corruption, discipline and control. Back then we knew we must not steal or act corruptly, now we must teach them ... how unnecessary! This curriculum [CAPS] just gives us more work ...* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>66-69</sub>). At this point her facial expression and tone reflected her irritation. While she was making these comments, I picked up how she frowned with a questioning look in her eyes, displaying a sense of powerlessness when she said *how unnecessary!* She also noted that she is an advocate of the traditional NATED Report 550, given the fact that this curriculum was more structured and focused. This is corroborated by the excerpts labelled P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>58-63</sub>.

Despite all the challenges and frustrations Abigail experiences with regards to teaching Accounting, she still has *a passion for the subject*. She said that if she had to, she *would choose this again*. She feels *fulfilled* and *absolutely enjoys teaching this subject*. She does not want to do anything else (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>72</sub>).

Next, I provide an interpretive narrative of Abigail's lived world descriptions as divulged in the interview transcripts.

### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

In this section I draw on Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein* and how it can be used to illuminate the essences captured by Abigail's descriptive narrative. This interpretive narrative is premised on the themes derived from the descriptive



narrative. To this end, I will first chronicle her professional journey with specific reference to her training as a pre-service teacher and her life as an Accounting teacher, followed by a discussion on the challenges, concerns and frustration she experiences in teaching the subject. Thirdly, I delve into her views about her principal and the district offices on their support or lack of support to effectively teach the content, and finally I present a discussion on her perceptions of the latest CAPS and all its predecessors in post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

Heidegger believed that in order to understand the world in which we live, we must be firmly situated in it. Unlike Husserl, he believed that understanding a person's lived world is not an epistemological problem but rather an ontological one. From this perspective Heidegger's ontological perspective is captured by the concept of *Dasein*. To accurately articulate a person's 'being there' – or in Abigail's case 'being in the world of teaching' – requires one to understand one's whole lived world in terms of the details of one's experiences. This means, I will first start with Abigail's training as a teacher and how this prepared her for her teaching career.

During the apartheid years South Africa had approximately 147 institutions providing teacher training organised on racially segregated basis and which fell under 19 different education authorities (Braund, 2015). Braund states that during this period there were 32 autonomous universities and technikons, and 105 colleges of education. It was at one of these technikons where Abigail received her training as an Accounting teacher. One of the consequences of the training during this period was the limited scope for the growth and development of lecturers at Technikons to become specialists in their respective fields in order to enable them to prepare their students well. At the time the apartheid government considered the essence of technikons to be technical training – meaning the application of knowledge, as opposed to their idea that the essence of a University is science – meaning the generation of new knowledge. This is substantiated in part one of the interview, when Abigail pointed out that the first two years of her training mainly covered Grades 10 and 11 school content, while in her final year



the scope of the content revolved mostly around Grade 12 school content. In her view she felt she had competent and good lecturers who *prepared her well* as they (the lecturers) *drilled* them in preparation for teaching (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>8-10</sub>). A substantial amount of time was also devoted to practice teaching or ‘on-the-job training’, when they had to spend ample time at the schools to teach the grades they were expected to teach. To ‘drill’ them more effectively, she pointed out that they also had an *in-house teaching practice programme* that, in her view, *worked well* as it was well planned and structured (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>14-15</sub>). This emphasis on teaching created in her a more *mature attitude* so that she knew what to do and delivered what was expected from her (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>7-16</sub>). It is important to note that this curriculum and training she received as a teacher took place in a political climate dominated by the ideology of apartheid. This system of politics in education infiltrated the way of thinking and existence of many people in South Africa, promoted traditional pedagogies of ‘knowledge about phenomena’ and neglected the lived-world experiences of learners. For this reason her training as a learner and pre-service teacher involved the promotion of factual knowledge, where the focus of her teaching was more on propositions of the core content as opposed to understanding the content from a perspective of being acquainted with it. This is illustrated when she said described her high school teacher (for full details see P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>10-12</sub>).

Concerning her lecturers she said *they were very good ... they drilled us ...* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>8-12</sub>). The upshot of this kind of training is that it shaped her perception of teaching and what she believes is the most effective way to teach Accounting, despite the fact that the CAPS curriculum requires teachers to follow a constructivist approach to teaching. A constructivist approach, according to Murphy (1997), involves learning that is linked to multiple perspectives, unique activities and lived-world examples and situations. Abigail seems to apply these activities in a very superficial way, because most of the time her approach to teaching is more rooted within traditional pedagogies. This is substantiated when she said that her learners do not *want to think* and that she must answer most of the questions for them. Also when asked how she teaches, she did not mention anything that shows the scaffolding of the content as required in a constructivist approach. According

to Vygotsky (1986), scaffolding involves monitoring how learners progress from one phase to the next, and how learners progress from where they are to where they should be with the guidance of the teacher. This brings me to her concerns about the poor preparation of learners in the GET Band.

One of Abigail's deepest concerns and frustrations that emerged from the constituent profile is the poor/inadequate preparation of learners in the GET Band. Here she pointed out how any teacher can enrol for a four-day workshop offered by the WCED in order to offer EMS as a subject. She stated that this is also one of the reasons why many learners refuse to choose Accounting in the FET Band. According to Schreuder (2009), Grade 10 Accounting (FET Band) builds on the fundamentals of Grade 9 Accounting (GET Band) and often teachers assume that learners have mastered the Grade 9 work. She argues that often this is not the case and that this in turn affects the FET Accounting teachers' morale and approach to the teaching and the learning environment. Her findings, echoed in Abigail's sentiments, reiterate the point that the reasons that learners are so poorly prepared in Grade 9 are: (i) poorly qualified and trained teachers who offer the subject; (ii) lack of support by the WCED; and (iii) poor guidelines for teachers in the GET Band. Schreuder's (2014) doctoral study points out that what is absent in the field of Accounting in South African schools is the absence of effective professional development programmes to improve the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of teachers. She considers the provision of professional development programmes to be crucial, given the long legacy of inadequate apartheid education in South Africa. In her view many teachers continue teaching the content using traditional pedagogies, while many others do not feel confident about teaching the content (Schreuder, 2014). Abigail's concerns are in agreement with both Schreuder's master's and doctoral dissertations on the teaching of Accounting in South Africa. Similar to Schreuder (2009, 2014), Abigail confirms that this is also one of the main reasons that many learners choose not to do Accounting in Grade 10 (FET Band).

According to Heidegger's (1927/1967) ontological disposition, the lifeworld cannot be separated into a dualism of the objective world and the person's

subjective mental processes, or in Husserlian terms the object of a person's consciousness. This means Abigail's concerns and frustrations express the complex and ambiguous conscious and unconscious challenges that she has to deal with on a daily basis. To address these challenges she stated that she would use the first term of Grade 10 to repeat most of the core content that should have been covered in the Grade 9 curriculum. She said *this is not necessarily a bad thing*, because it helps her to bring the learners to a level where she thinks they should be in order to understand the content that follows. This means she does not only see and view the world of the learner as it is, but also as 'something' or 'in a way' as a call for action on her part to assist her learners. While some teachers might continue with their work and assume it not to be part of their role to repeat some of the Grade 9 work, Abigail makes it her responsibility to do so. Consequently, her lifeworld stands out as including social responsibility to a large extent. As Løgstrup (1992) puts it, as the world of others affects us we affect others.

Concerning her views about support from her immediate school principal and the district office to effectively teach the content, she stated that her principal does not have a good attitude and does not even assist with the basics, such as stationery and photocopying paper (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>51-53</sub>). This negative attitude of principals is consistent with the literature on the role of leadership in schools in South Africa. For example, a study conducted by Avolio and Bass (2004) points out that transformational leadership continues to privilege the power of the individual and tends to neglect issues of teamwork and participation. According to Abigail, such a leadership approach impacts negatively on teaching and learning, because rigid structures of bureaucracy replace the flexibility and intelligent decision making that could further advance the efficacy of teachers. She also points out that the local district office of the WCED does not assist her and that the training they receive is a complete waste of her time. She further stated that the only time when officials of the district office are evident is at the end of year, when they have to finalise the assessments of their learners (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>53-54</sub>). A study conducted by Koopman, Le Grange and De Mink (2016), although in

Physical Science, reports similar findings regarding teachers who complain about the poor quality of the training and workshops offered by the district offices.

Sparks (1994) states that professional development, as a support mechanism offered by district offices, is critical and key to developing teachers, since they are considered to be life-long learners. In professional development programmes teachers assume the role of learners and co-learners in order to transform their core function of teaching. According to Klein (2001), if workshops and professional development programmes are designed with a focus on the needs of teachers and are aligned with the legislated curriculum, they not only bring about a paradigm shift regarding understanding the curriculum, but also give teachers the necessary technical knowledge and skills that promote a reform-orientated approach to teaching. Although the CAPS for Accounting states that teachers must adopt innovative teaching strategies in the delivery of their content (DBE, 2011), researchers reported that many teachers did not receive the necessary training to implement the suggested instructional approaches (Schreuder, 2009, 2014). This lack of experience makes it very difficult for teachers to change their traditional pedagogies, which tend to be based on passive rote learning in which the minds of the learners are seen as blank slates upon which to inscribe knowledge.

Abigail's negative disposition towards the CAPS (expressed in P<sub>2A</sub><sub>58-71</sub>) provides insight into the fundamental structures of how she perceives and implements the curriculum. According to Houlgate (2005), what a person thinks and does cannot be separated from one another. What a person thinks and does forms the fundamental structures of his or her being. These fundamental structures apply purely to the ontological realm of existence. Her views about the CAPS are encapsulated in the statements labelled P<sub>2A</sub><sub>63-65</sub> and P<sub>2A</sub><sub>71</sub>. These statements point to the purity of her consciousness when she implements the curriculum as a way of being. According to Houlgate (2005), Abigail's statements above do not exhaust the richness of her ways of being in the classroom as an implementer of the curriculum, but create an *a priori* condition of existence. This *a priori* condition of her existence is shaped by these structures, which in turn shape the

way she thinks and views her duty in the classroom as an active implementer of the CAPS. When asked to compare the CAPS and the NCS with NATED Report 550, she stated that the old apartheid curriculum was more focused and to the point in its guidelines, and she knew exactly what to do when she was working with it. However, concerning these new curricula, she said they are *too confusing* ... and they *change all the time*. She further stated that some of the content is *unnecessary* and that it should not be her duty to teach these aspects. These fundamental structures of her thoughts point towards the essences of how she views the curriculum. Each fundamental structure of her thoughts has a specific appeal to her consciousness that shapes her perception of the curriculum. She also underscored the poor training they received in preparation to implement the CAPS. In her opinion, the training did not prepare her to apply effective methodologies for the various topics. This, she stated, is not provided in the training, nor is it explained in the guideline documents. Three things should be noted about her perceptions and views about the CAPS: (i) she perceives the curriculum to have been designed in such a way that it does not prepare learners adequately (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>27, 28, 58-62</sub>); (ii) there are too many elements that are unnecessary (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>63-65</sub>); and (iii) she experiences a sense of confusion and what exacerbates this is the poor training that is provided to understand the CAPS (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>55-57</sub>). All these fundamental structures of her thoughts form a unified whole of how she perceives and implements the curriculum in the Accounting classroom.

Although she landed up in the teaching profession by default, in the end this career brought her fulfilment (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>72</sub>).

#### d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

In this section I attempt to give meaning to Abigail's lived-world experiences by providing an anticipatory interpretive narrative on three aspects that emerge throughout part two of her transcript, namely, (i) how her training as an in-service teacher anticipated her being as an Accounting teacher; (ii) how her concerns, challenges and frustrations as the 'enabling conditions' assist her to get a 'maximum grip' on reality ; and (iii) how her educational experiences (school and tertiary) significantly influenced her perception of the curriculum.

According to Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' in conjunction with 'common sense' – which identifies the sensible amidst objective conditions – we are in the world and therefore do not extricate our consciousness of the world (1945/1962). This consciousness, arrived at through experiences, becomes capable of communicable expression that always has meaning. It is 'this' meaning shaped by the enabling conditions that forms the object of a person's consciousness. In other words, my aim in crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative, by drawing on Merleau-Ponty's ideas, is not to paint a picture of how Abigail experiences different phenomena, but how the phenomena on a continuum of time and space shaped her experiences as an Accounting teacher.

In part two of the interview Abigail constantly reiterated how her lecturers prepared her well for the profession (for full details refer P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>8-17</sub>). She then unpacked her meaning of 'good lecturers' and 'good training as Accounting teachers' when she said *I think my lecturers at Pen Tech prepared us very well, because they drilled us ...* We then see her perception of 'good teaching' at work or reflected in her own practice as a teacher, when she describes how she teaches the content to her learners. She uses the phrases *I drill them...*, *...I tell them the rules...* so that they *...must memorise the rules...* (see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>43-49</sub>). All these statements by Abigail can be described as reflecting a lived-in world where certain actions are implemented, giving rise to a form of synthesis through which she formulates her perception. The actions of her teacher give rise to a particular understanding of how people learn, which in turn becomes inscribed in her body. According to Abigail, the way she learned was a systematic process that involves words like 'drilling', 'memorisation' and 'rules'. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory', the way she learned was cultivated by her teachers and lecturers, and can be said to be significant. Her body is coping without thinking critically about the effects of such teaching strategies, that she described as *good teachers and lecturers*. This seems to suggest that as learners and students they were left outside, looking in, without being able to participate in how to learn more effectively. Therefore, central to a phenomenological investigation is the search to understand the position from which people speak in the midst of a situation (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). This is because people find themselves in the

world and is already connected to everything when they start to reflect on their existence. Abigail's narrative illuminates how someone orientates himself/herself through sub-conscious behaviour that mirrors that of her Accounting teacher and lecturers. This Merleau-Ponty refers to as the 'intentional arc'. He states that "This intentional arc creates the unity of the senses, the unity of the senses with intelligence, and the unity of sensitivity and motricity" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 137). Merleau-Ponty avers that 'embodied significant experiences' in the past are always projected back into the world. Thus in Abigail's narrative the significant powerful influence of her teachers and lecturers is reflected back into her own world as a teacher.

Fusing Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) theory of the 'intentional arc' (such as the 'conditions of existence'), with the challenges, concerns, and frustrations that she faces moulds her body in a tacit or implicit way. This brings me to the subject-body and the object-body dichotomy. The subject-body is the body that lives pre-reflectively, while the object-body is the body that is perceived by others. The statements labelled P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>33-37</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>51-54</sub> reflect her frustration at her EMS colleagues, her principal and district officials. All these statements refer to the subject-body in which she perceives the colleague as incompetent to teach the Accounting aspects of EMS and her principal and district officials as unsupportive. When she mentioned, in response to the four-day EMS Grade 9 teacher's lack of knowledge of the Accounting aspects in the EMS curriculum, that *this is frustrating but not so bad because I do it anyway*, and stated concerning the poor support of the principal that *this is frustrating but what can you do*, it is fair to assume that she has resigned herself to all the challenges and concerns. In other words, she perceives that she cannot change the situation, but has to deal with it in a way she deems appropriate and will not be in conflict with her own beliefs. By responding in this manner, her body gets a 'maximum grip' on reality in a (close to) automatic way, which means that her attention is detached from her body and directed towards the problems her mind is directed towards. Her concerns and frustration with the poor support from the WCED became the object of her consciousness in which her body appears as the focus of attention. All these point to an anticipatory attitude of finding ways to work



around the problems are commensurate with a person who deals with her own problems, challenges and concerns in her own way.

Her views about the latest CAPS curriculum and all its predecessor curricula in post-apartheid South Africa are very negative (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>52-60</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>63-71</sub>).

Her preference for the NATED Report 550 arises out of the nature and psychological priorities that her body deploys around her. She was introduced to this curriculum as a primary and high school learner, as a university student, and was then expected to practise and implement this curriculum in the first decade of her career as an Accounting teacher. Traces of ‘clinging to this old curriculum’ in her practice are evident in her transcript, despite the curriculum being obsolete, when she says *I tell them the rules, ...they must know the rules, they must memorise the rules of Accounting...* and so forth. These statements show that habit is never something bygone and left behind, but lives on and biases her present expectations of the latest NCS and the CAPS curricula. Abigail’s views about the NCS and the CAPS underscores that we are not directly aware of every passing moment, but rely on the structures of what we know in order to create a stable situation in which to live and function daily. A person who has lost his or her sight is aware of it, but sometimes when placed in a familiar context relies on what he or she knows about the space to find his or her way around.

## **5.6 Research participant: Bryan**

### **5.6.1 Part one of the interview**

#### **a) Constructing the constituent profile**

Upon arriving at Bryan’s school (School B), he came to meet me eagerly at the entrance. His demeanour exuded enthusiasm. From his body language I got the impression that he was thrilled to contribute to the pool of knowledge on teaching Accounting. His zeal rubbed off on me. I immediately felt at ease and energized about conducting the interview. First he showed me around the school. We popped in at various classrooms. I was neither impressed by nor surprised at the



lack of resources in these classrooms. Bryan also showed me the room that they use to store all the groceries for the daily meals for the learners. The meals are cooked by volunteers. On our way to the library (where our interview was to be conducted) we had to pass through the hall, where a few learners were rehearsing for a play, which created the impression that despite the poor infrastructure and lack of resources, the school is doing something positive towards adding a cultural dimension (value) to the lives of the learners.

After I gave Bryan a run-down of the structure of the interview and approximately how long it would take, I got straight into the first question, that is, for him to tell me about his childhood experiences. I probed for a detailed account of the place(s) in which he grew up, the community in which he was raised, and the culture of the people with whom he grew up. He responded:

*<sup>1/</sup>The first twelve years of my life were spent in Belgravia, Athlone ... we lived ... on a family property ... it was the home of my grandparents... we lived in a sink house<sup>12</sup> with electricity, but no running water [inside] ... our ablution facilities comprised of an outside tap. We lived there until I was twelve when we moved to a council house<sup>13</sup> ...a brick home ... on the outskirts of Hanover Park. <sup>2/</sup>Therefore we were not caught up in the wilder side of Hanover Park ... an area notorious for gangsters.*

When I asked Bryan about his father, he responded with great admiration by saying:

*<sup>3/</sup>My father was a very good waiter. He taught me to be a waiter as well. I was quite fortunate my first job was as a waiter and my father was my mentor. And everything that he taught me, even the value systems ... I still carry with me today ... <sup>4/</sup>hard work ... workaholic. I always remember, he told me ... <sup>5/</sup>remember that when you are working you are being paid to work. It doesn't matter if you are paid a lot; you decided that you want to do the job. <sup>6/</sup>So always do the best that you can do.*

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<sup>12</sup> Sink house/shack: refer Chapter Four, section 4.3.6 (a) for an explanation

<sup>13</sup> Council house/sub-economic house: a house provided by the government at low rents for people with low incomes.

Concerning his mother, he told me that she was <sup>7/</sup>*a very loyal person ... a very responsible person*. For many years his mother had a sleep-in job as a <sup>8/</sup>*housekeeper for white people*. His mother taught him to be <sup>9/</sup>*generous*. He recalled that the people in the area used to say that *her door was always open for the family*. He stated that both his parents taught their children *to help each other*.

Whilst talking about his family he added that:

*I was <sup>10/</sup>seventh in the family. <sup>11/</sup>I was the first one to attend a university, my eldest brother ... he attended, at that time it was still called Cape Technikon ... and he became qualified as a quantity surveyor. .... my other siblings they ... some never completed school.*

To the question as to whether his parents had any dreams for him, he responded:

*<sup>12/</sup>My parents just encouraged us to work hard at school. And then whatever we wanted to do, they would support us.*

Whilst relating his early life, Bryan added that he started working in the catering industry <sup>13/</sup>*since the age of 16 until he was 31 years old*, because it was only then that he became permanently employed as a teacher. He asserted that the experience of being a waiter taught him to be <sup>14/</sup>*focused – serving about 100 people during one hour, you have to know your purpose, that is, to make somebody happy and to make sure that the organisation that you are working for is seen in a positive light*.

Regarding the schools he attended, Bryan stated that:

*I never attended school in Hanover Park, <sup>15/</sup>I attended school in Belgravia. ... my first school was Alexander Primary school, that school was closed and converted into a secondary school ... in 1980. I then went to <sup>16/</sup>Heatherdale Primary School also in Belgravia and later <sup>17/</sup>I attended Belgravia High School.*

To the questions I asked Bryan about how he experienced the subject Accounting when he was at school as well as the Accounting teacher's teaching strategies, he reported:

<sup>18/</sup>*I enjoyed Accounting in high school - that was my favourite subject. Actually, there are two parts to this whole journey of Accounting. ... in 1985 - it was Standard 8 (Grade 10) ... I was a very shy person. So I was in this class with a few friends, but I didn't feel comfortable in this class. <sup>19/</sup>I was doing Accounting, but I wasn't good at it. I was performing poorly. <sup>20/</sup>I then decided I am going to be involved in politics. I wanted to be involved in something worth fighting for. <sup>21/</sup>So I didn't write any exam that year. Four, five of us ... decided to stay in Standard 8 [the next year]. <sup>22/</sup>And then I met the most wonderful classmates ever. I also say they changed my life. I became more confident, felt more comfortable ... <sup>23/</sup>the previous year I had this one Accounting teacher, she was a nice lady, but I just couldn't understand Accounting, and then <sup>24/</sup>when I repeated Standard 8, I got a new Accounting teacher and then my marks just soared. I would get ... 396 out of 400. <sup>25/</sup>It just all clicked in that particular year. Everything just came together nicely. <sup>26/</sup>I was very independent. I hardly ever asked the teacher questions. I would basically just sit in class and the teacher would teach and I would understand. I would go home and do my homework, come back the next day and everything would be right, and I just kind of remember I had this thing for Accounting. So, <sup>27/</sup>there was nothing special that the teacher did besides teach. Maybe I matured more over that year. The previous year I started working [part-time in the catering industry] as well, so mixing with different people maybe [it] opened my mind as well. Maybe it was a divine thing.....*

When I enquired about how he actually decided to become a teacher, Bryan surprised me and explained the circumstances that eventually led to that decision:

<sup>28/</sup>*I did a BComm ... my intention was to become a Chartered Accountant. And then <sup>28/</sup>in my second year, I started helping my friends and through helping my friends, I told them I actually want to become a teacher ... and after that ... school children would come to me ... their parents asked me can't you teach my child, can't you help them with Accounting. They responded well to what I was doing - their marks improved. So, I think that also helped me to make my decision to say this is what I wanted to do. I just said, I want to become a teacher but then my friends ... said, no, it is not the right profession, and I put it on hold. <sup>29/</sup>And then I worked as an Accountant*

*Clerk for a retailer in Cape Town for one year and then as a waiter for two years. It was <sup>30/</sup>during those two years, I went and did my HDE. So I became a teacher later in my life. <sup>31/</sup>I did my BComm at UCT (University of Cape Town), and I did my HDE (Higher Diploma in Education – today it is called PGCE) at UWC. And the ACE: Language across the Curriculum (Advanced Certificate in Education) course I did through Metropolitan University (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), the old UPE (University of Port Elizabeth).*

With regards to his major subjects at UCT, he replied that he majored in <sup>32/</sup>*Accounting and Economics*.

When I asked Bryan what led to his decision to do his BComm at UCT and later his HDE (teacher qualification) at UWC, he related the following experience:

*<sup>33/</sup>I had a very hard time at UCT – socially. I had friends but I sometimes felt more like an outsider with my friends ... what we had at UCT - we had different groups - the Jews who sat in the lesson, we had the Muslims who sat on the steps, close to the cafeteria and the you had the Christian or Coloured who sat in the, what was it called, that was the ... also a cafeteria but there were two sides. So, we had class separation. <sup>34/</sup>I never applied to UWC [after Standard 10 now Grade 12] because there were always boycotts or strikes. And I always thought, I said to myself, I don't want that interference ... I want to, if I go to study ... I want to finish my studies and that is it. <sup>35/</sup>And then when I eventually went to UWC [to do my HDE] - because I never had a very nice experience at UCT - I met more people than I had ever at UCT. It was a totally different environment.*

Bryan responded to my question regarding how he experienced his teacher training qualification especially at UWC, as follows:

*<sup>36/</sup>When I was doing my undergraduate, you know, I sat... frantically ... writing down whatever the lecturer was saying and not questioning anything; <sup>37/</sup>but when I got to do my HDE I was more mature, ... perhaps more confident as a person ... we would have discussions or the lecturer*

*would say something ... I would then say, I don't agree. The lecturers sometimes didn't like it. [Perhaps] I didn't understand what the lecturer was saying, or maybe misinterpreted it ... I was a different student, when I did my HDE ... my mind was more open, I enjoyed it a lot, even my practice teaching was a very nice experience.*

To the question on the teaching strategies employed by the lecturers at UWC, Bryan responded:

*<sup>38/</sup>They concentrated on the principles of the subject. I preferred Accounting to Economics. In Accounting [method] ... the work was more simplistic compared to what I did at UCT. <sup>39/</sup>When I started my practice teaching ... my mentor ... would speak to me about life, and about children and how they are; how you need to teach.*

I coded 39 statements with key phrases from the first part of the interview that revealed various NUMs. These NUMs formed the basis of Bryan's lifeworld and were used to craft a descriptive narrative, an interpretive narrative, and an anticipatory interpretive narrative, which follows below. Each statement was numbered and should be read as P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>39</sub> (P<sub>1</sub> refers to part one of the interview; while B<sub>1</sub> refers to Bryan's statement one; and B<sub>39</sub> refers to Bryan's statement thirty-nine).

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

Until the age of 12, Bryan lived in a shack, situated on his grandparents' property in Belgravia, Athlone. The shack in which he lived had no electricity, no running water inside, only an outside tap. They later relocated to a council house situated on the outskirts of Hanover Park. Hanover Park was historically identified as a coloured neighbourhood according to the Land Reform Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Hanover Park has always been known as a gangster-infested area, characterized by its aggressive youths; Bryan pointed out that although he grew up in Hanover Park, he was never ... *caught up in the wilder side...* of the place (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>2</sub>). He attended school in Belgravia – that is, both primary school as well as high school – during a period in which the discourse of education was to marginalize and suppress non-white children. Broadly

expressed, the objective of the government for blacks/non-whites was to prepare them for careers in the labour market, such as waitering, which he himself did for almost his entire teenage years. [See Chapter One, section 1.2 for an explanation of the ideology of Christian National Education and the doctrine of Fundamental Pedagogics; for a more detailed account of the ideology of CNE and the doctrine of FP see Enslin (1984), Kruger (2008), and Le Grange, (2008)].

Bryan's father was an influential figure in his life. His father, who was a waiter by occupation, also taught him the skills of being a waiter – skills that he later used when he had a part-time job while still at school and for fifteen years afterwards, until he became permanently employed as a teacher. Bryan pays his father the highest of compliment when he describes him as his mentor who taught him the value of *hard work*. He can still remember his father's words echoing in his mind that one should remember that when *you are working you are being paid to work* and that one always has to *do the best that you can do* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>4-6</sub>). These became such influential slogans in his life that if it were not for these values, he would have entered the teaching profession *with a totally different mindset* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>6</sub>). His skills as a waiter forced him to be focused. He learned that one has to know one's purpose. According to Bryan, in the restaurant industry knowing one's purpose means that one has to *make somebody happy and make sure that the organisation you are working for is seen in a positive light* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>14</sub>). Drawing on Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory', it is evident that his father represents more than simply an influence on him, but was rather an 'essence' or 'structure' who illuminates his perspective on the workplace. This holds true because Husserl (1998) describes essences as phenomena that guide a person's thinking and help him or her to make judgments and formulate ideas about how to deal with the world around one.

Bryan described his mother as a *generous* person whose *door was always open for the family*. Both his mother and father taught all of their children to *help each other* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>7-9</sub>). Of all his siblings, Bryan was the first and only one to obtain a university degree. His eldest brother studied at a technikon and became a quantity surveyor, while none of his other siblings ever completed school (Grade 12)

(P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>11</sub>). According to Bryan, his parents did not mention any specific dreams that they had for their children, except that they simply encouraged them to *work hard at school* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>12</sub>). It seems as if Bryan and his eldest brother were the only two siblings who applied their father's advice, because they were the only children who eventually obtained a post-school qualification.

Bryan attended school during the apartheid years and at the time he attended Belgravia High the school was very involved in politics. In Grade 10 he wanted to *be involved in something worth fighting for* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>20</sub>). He therefore became involved in politics, because he agreed with the cause of the young people in South Africa at that time. Unfortunately he did not write the final examination at the end of that year and decided to repeat Grade 10. During his second year in Grade 10 he had a new Accounting teacher. He does not recall the teacher doing anything special except teach, but contrary to the previous year, his marks soared tremendously. He assumes it was because he had developed into a more confident young person, more independent – more mature. He describes the fact that his Accounting marks suddenly sky rocketed as *it just all clicked in that particular year*. He thinks that his mind was more open and added that it might have been a *divine thing* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>18-27</sub>). Perhaps it is his father's influence and perspective on 'working hard' that inspired him and that gave him that breakthrough in his Accounting. There is no doubt that the lessons he learned about reaping the rewards of independent hard work have formed the essence of his perception of how Accounting should be taught and how to approach one's job holistically.

After completing Grade 12 he enrolled for a BComm degree at UCT (historically a university reserved mainly for whites), majoring in Accounting and Economics; his intention was to become a Chartered Accountant. However, in his second year of study, while assisting school children with Accounting, he realised that he had the knowledge and skill to be a teacher. After completing his studies, he worked as an Accountant's Clerk for one year. He then worked as a waiter and at the same time during the next two years completed his HDE at UWC (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>28-31</sub>).

Bryan did not want to apply to do his BComm at UWC (a historically coloured university) because *there were always boycotts and strikes*. However, his



experience at UCT was a lonely one. He mentioned that he had friends, but that he felt *like an outsider*. He also mentioned that a kind of *class separation* existed at UCT (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>33-34</sub>). Contrary to his lonely experience at UCT, his (social) experience at UWC was quite different because [he] *met more people than [he] had ever [met] at UCT*. He described the environment at UWC as *a totally different environment* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>35</sub>).

Bryan portrayed his undergraduate experience at UCT as frantically writing down whatever the lecturer was saying and not questioning anything – transmission-based method of teaching. However, he explains that at UWC the lecturers promoted class discussions and that he had the courage to question and/or disagree with the lecturers. He assumes that he was brave enough to question and/or disagree with them because he was *more mature*, and *perhaps more confident as a person*. He recalled that the lecturers did not always welcome the fact that he disagreed with them. Lecturers at UWC (during his HDE) concentrated on the principles of Accounting and how to teach the subject at school. The Accounting (method) he did at UWC *was more simplistic* compared to what he did at UCT. Despite the lecturers' attitude regarding him sometimes disagreeing with them, Bryan enjoyed his one-year postgraduate experience at UWC. He emphasised that his teaching practice was *a very nice experience*. He sounded grateful that his mentor taught him *about life, about children – how they are [and] how you need to teach* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>36-39</sub>).

#### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Drawing on Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein* as an ontological representation of Bryan's subjective experiences, apart from the social, political, and cultural crisis he experienced during childhood, there is a much deeper and authentic side to his existence. In the light of Heidegger's philosophy, we can only attempt to provide an authentic explanation of Bryan's thinking based on the directives of his own articulation about being. In this narrative, I will respond to how he finds himself submerged in relative poverty as a child, the influence of his parents (mostly his father), his experiences with Accounting at school level and



his experiences at a 'liberal' university that was reserved mostly for white students.

Similar to most other children growing up in coloured communities, Bryan's childhood experiences were not unique because poverty and affliction as a way of life was no stranger to coloured children. This means that most coloured children, like Bryan, would have found themselves not only submerged in poverty themselves, but were also surrounded by it. Racial segregation in South Africa predetermined the way children like Bryan would think, act and live. In other words, these are not philosophical matters, but rather involve issues of judgment, values and worldviews that spiral into inner violence in which the self goes into hiding as the focus shifts to survival. For example, the violent Group Areas Act of 1950 was not only about racial separation, but intended to prevent interracial contact, so that white South Africans could enjoy exclusive rights by occupying prime properties, while approximately five million coloured people and many more black people were left stranded and homeless as they were forcibly removed from their homes. One of the violent consequences of this act was the establishment or reinforcement of a colonial mentality that was strategically induced to stifle human-rights driven ways to think, perceive and live. Based on the stories of many other coloured people, in some cases family members, as a coloured person growing up under apartheid I can identify and feel with Bryan, when he says ... *I lived in a shack...with electricity but no running water inside...* and ...*we only moved to a brick house when I was twelve years old...*, as he speaks of his childhood experiences and the challenges he was confronted with he is unconsciously foregrounding the destructive power and technologisation of their effects on his psyche. These laws not only stripped him of his true nature 'to be', but also of his cultural heritage. I firmly believe that those most affected psychologically by the Population Registration Act (30 of 1950) (*Government Gazette*, Extraordinary, 26 May 1967) were coloured communities, because 'Coloured' according to this Act was an ambiguous (nebulous) term that included different racial categories, for example, Cape Coloured, Malay, Griqua, and 'other' groups classified as Coloured. 'Other' was termed the last category and associated with those who did not fit in with these categories. In other words they

were not only financially ruined but also culturally scarred as they suffered from an identity crisis. Moreover, under this legislation (Land Reform Act, Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act) not many coloured people owned homes or property, since the demand for homes exceeded the spatial capacity reserved for coloured communities. Therefore, when Bryan states that they lived with their grandparents, my assumption is that his grandparents were forcibly removed from their former home in a centrally located area and moved to a distantly located township such as Manenberg, Hanover Park, Athlone<sup>14</sup>, and so forth.

Apart from suffering financially and culturally as a result of oppressive apartheid laws and policies, most non-white individuals, like Bryan's parents, also bled psychologically, as a colonial mindset (or way of thinking) premised on white superiority was promoted. This is evident in his descriptions of his father's thinking, a 'waiter' by profession, ... *taught me (his son) to be a waiter...*, to which Bryan surprisingly responded, *I was fortunate my first job was as a waiter and my father was my mentor*. Bryan remained a waiter until the age of 31 years. The same can be said about his mother, who *for many years had a sleep-in job as a housekeeper for white people* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>8</sub>). All these developments shaped the identity and mindset of his parents, which subsequently rubbed off on their children, who internalized these values.

Significant too, was the education system in which Bryan found himself submerged. He pointed out that he attended Belgravia High School and in 1985, a period in which the political situation in South Africa was at its worst, he chose Accounting as an elective in Grade 10. During this period most non-white schools were forcibly shut down because of protest action and student movements in the fight against the apartheid regime with its degrading laws and policies. Bryan echoes the effect of the political situation when he stated:

*I was doing Accounting, but I wasn't good at it. I was performing poorly. I then decided I am going to be involved in politics. I wanted to be involved in*

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<sup>14</sup> Manenberg and Hanover Park are townships near the suburb of Athlone.

*something worth fighting for. So I didn't write any exam that year. Four, five of us ... decided to stay in Standard 8 [the next year] (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>19-21</sub>).*

His decision to repeat Standard 8 (Grade 10) was, by his own admission, not only a conscious and calculated decision, but a turning point with respect to the learning of Accounting. Suddenly he found himself amongst considerate friends with whom he got along with very well. Consequently, he started to look afresh at the subject Accounting. For full details see (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>22-26</sub>).

He mentioned that it was not the teaching approach and strategies of his Accounting teacher that made him grasp the subject better; instead he became *very independent ... hardly ever asked the teacher questions ... basically just [sat] in class ... the teacher would teach and [he] would understand ... [he] would go home and do [his] homework, come back the next day and everything would be right* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>26</sub>). In other words, he experienced a revitalization in his perspective on Accounting and learning about it. What had previously obscured his understanding of Accounting, no longer hampered his progress. He describes this experience as possibly a *divine* intervention (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>27</sub>). However the fact that he applied his mind in class means that he experienced what Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) calls a dialectical shift in his thinking. This means that being is interpreted as for-me and for-itself. This is evident when he said I learned to become *independent from* my teacher.

After completing his school career, he enrolled for a BComm degree at UCT in the mid-1980s. Not many non-white learners were granted entry to study at UCT, because historically it was a bastion of 'white liberal's that kept them out. During the later 1980s, while Bryan was in his first year at UCT, there were a lot of clashes between the police and student protestors – so much so that the government deployed a heavy police presence on the campus to suppress protesting students. These protests were not only in opposition to the then Prime Minister P.W. Botha and the state of emergency in the country, but also about the 'End Conscription Campaign' that demanded an end of the conscription of all white males into the South African military. Therefore, when Bryan mentions the social stratification and class divisions that existed on the campus, which made his

experience very unpleasant, he is alluding to the political cloud that engulfed the university at the time. He also mentioned that all he wanted to do was to stay away from the political and just remain focused by completing his degree. This was also the main reason he decided not to enrol for his BComm at UWC.<sup>15</sup> After completing his BComm at UCT in Accounting as one of his majors, he enrolled at UWC for a postgraduate teaching qualification. He described his one-year HDE as a much more pleasant experience as he made new friends and could engage with his lecturers in the lecturer theatres – an experience he never had at UCT. In Bryan's words, the teaching method used by the lecturers when he was doing his HDE at UWC was very *simplistic* and the focus was more on the *school content*.

d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Merleau-Ponty might have described Bryan growing up as a child in dismal poverty *on the outskirts of Hanover Park ...living in a shack* as the lived body in action as an object grasping consciousness of being-in-the world in a particular place and time. At the most basic level his experiences in these conditions are constantly 'tutoring' his body to give meaning to and perceive what it means to be 'poor', 'coloured' and 'dependent' on others. These experiences that shape his consciousness cannot be detached from his 'body' and its 'social participation' in the situation. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) writes:

[S]cientific perspectives according to which I am a moment of the world are always naïve and hypocritical because they always imply, without mentioning it, that other perspective—the perspective of consciousness—by which a world first arranges itself around me and begins to exist for me. To return to the things themselves is to return to this world prior to knowledge, this world of which knowledge always speaks, and this world with regard to which every scientific determination is abstract, signitive, and dependent, just like geography with regard to the landscape where we first learned what a forest, a meadow or a river is (p. xxii).

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<sup>15</sup> University of the Western Cape was historically a university reserved for non-white [specifically coloured] students by the apartheid government. It was also the only traditional university in the Western Cape Province that non-white students did not need permission from the Department of Coloured Affairs to attend.

Here Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) moves away from learning as an intellectually constructed activity towards learning as an ‘embodied’ engagement in which the conditions of existence or ‘enabling conditions’ abstracted from Bryan’s surroundings become knowledge. Thus conceived Bryan’s embodied experiences are stored and coded into neurological and sensory processes that shape his thinking, which can also be translated as ‘automatic habitual action’ between being and the way the world appears to him. This is because the body works out its own schema and images independent of propositional mental representation.

The role his parents played in his life and how he ended up as a waiter, which he describes as ... *I was fortunate that my first job was as a waiter...*, are examples of how conditions of existence shape a person’s thinking and how the schema and embodied images develop into the ‘pre-noetic’ level, as the ‘intentional arc’ and a ‘maximum grip’ form the essence of a person’s thinking. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) the ‘intentional arc’ refers to the significant experiences that a person embodies that re-arranges the information a person holds about the world. What gets re-arranged in consciousness is the way that the person looks at the world. The ‘intentional arc’ then feeds into a seeking for a ‘maximum grip’ on the world, that is, what is significant for the individual. Connecting this to Bryan’s choice of becoming a waiter, of significance to him was the role his father, a waiter by profession, played in his life. He said *I saw him* (his father) *as my mentor*. Moreover, he added that his father taught him the importance of ... *hard work...* while his mother taught him ... *to be loyal, ... responsible...* [and] ... *to help others*.

Bryan describes his first experience with Accounting as a school subject as a little unpleasant and problematic, as he could not cope with it. He added that the classroom environment or ‘classroom space’ stifled his understanding of Accounting. The role his teacher and his peers played did not help him much to excel in the subject. After repeating the grade (because the political environment had interfered with his learning) he experienced what he describes as an incomprehensible ‘leap’ which, according to Merleau-Ponty, is

viewed as being unable to ‘grasp his consciousness’ as to why he suddenly excelled in the subject. For full details see P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>22-27</sub>.

Bryan cannot account for his challenges and the sudden positive experience with the subject. Drawing from Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962) concept of determinateness, that which is indeterminate in consciousness remains so until primary attention puts in view those images that give deeper meaning to his sudden leap. In Bryan’s case the term ‘independent’ is a key phrase, because subconsciously his father’s advice about ‘hard work’ and his mother’s conception of being ‘responsible’ assisted him to take control of the classroom space in which he found himself. Consciousness can be viewed as a repository where principles and values such as these can be stored and revived for later use. According to Bryan, the teacher whom he describes as *very nice* speaks of an emotional connectedness, but not much can be said about her teaching methods or strategies as an approach to the lessons.

After completing his BCom degree at UCT, he worked for two years at an accounting firm which added practical knowledge about the discipline of Accounting. He then decided to enrol for his HDE to become an Accounting teacher. The next section will analyse part two of the interview.

### 5.6.2 Part two of the interview

#### a) Constructing the constituent profile

Whereas the first part of the interview focused on his childhood experiences and educational journey at both school and university, the second part of the interview focused mainly on how he experiences his professional context (lived space) and the Accounting curriculum (for example, challenges, concerns and active engagement).

In focusing on Bryan’s lived life, I started out by asking him to explain where his teaching career began. He replied:

*<sup>1</sup>I started off at Ravensmead as a Business Economics and Economics teacher in January 1997.*

He added that in his entire teaching career he has taught at only two schools. The school at which he is currently teaching (School B) is his second school. He started off at this school in <sup>2/</sup>*March 1998 as a post-level 1 teacher teaching EMS as well as [teaching] extra-curricular computer classes to the learners.* He has been at School B for 18 years.

To my question whether or not he had a mentor in those early days, he responded:

<sup>3/</sup>*No, I knew that you could become a principal ... you could become an HOD, and all those things ...but my mind was never on it.* <sup>4/</sup>*I actually said I don't want to go into school management - I want to be a teacher. That was my mindset.*

I was intrigued at Bryan's professional trajectory in which he progressed to Deputy-Principal within such a short period of time; therefore I asked him to describe his journey from a post-level 1 teacher to his current position of Deputy-Principal at School B. He explained:

<sup>5/</sup>*I was ... in the right place at the right time. ...* <sup>6/</sup>*of all the teachers, I was the only one who could use the computer ... because I did information systems at UCT.* <sup>7/</sup>*I did a lot of work that was not my responsibility, and by doing that I caught the principal's eye ... he encouraged me. ... he gave me responsibilities and I grew, as a person ... professionally.* <sup>8/</sup>*Then I became a Head of Department. Four, five years after that, I was appointed as the Deputy-Principal of the school.*

Although he mentioned that a post in management was not foremost on his mind when he started his teaching career, it seemed as if Bryan is passionate about his current position. I therefore asked him to give me more details about his role as the Deputy-Principal. He replied eagerly:

<sup>9/</sup>*it is quite exciting to be in top-level management at the school. You know I have to sit and prepare for the next year. When the school opens there is a timetable, everybody is allocated.* <sup>10/</sup>*I am a bit of a workaholic ... These responsibilities ... I would do it during the school holidays. Finish it ... and it would be so rewarding.*

His response with regards to his initial experience in FET Accounting at School B was that:

<sup>11/</sup>*In the first year the results were not good, but they were not disastrous. We started working up to 70, 80, 90% pass rates in Accounting. <sup>12/</sup>A lot of it has to do with my understanding of Accounting and I think the learners appreciate it as a subject that is not just do this, do that. There is a thinking process, there is a logic to it ... you can understand it if you want to understand it. <sup>13/</sup>Then we got learners who wanted to do Accounting but they were incapable of it and we decided to change the system. We chose for them ... and then there was an improvement in the results.*

He mentioned that the way he teaches Accounting relates to a general way of dealing with life's problems. He explained that he uses a 5-step approach to analyse a transaction, namely:

<sup>14/</sup>*What is the amount, what are the two accounts, do they increase or decrease, what type of accounts are they, do you debit or credit these accounts? Now with that you can do the General Ledger, you can do the Accounting Equation, adjustments of a Trial Balance, all those kind of things, just by using those five questions.*

He continued to explain his teaching style:

<sup>15/</sup>*They get homework, so what I do, <sup>16/</sup>I would explain the work to them and I would do an example with them, but <sup>17/</sup>my philosophy always with them, is look, you are here to learn. You've got to understand, you are going to make mistakes and you are going to get things wrong. I want you to go home, read the activity, and attempt to do the answer. If I want 15 things from you, I want 15 answers. Come with that to me, right or wrong, and then I can work with you, but don't come to me and say sir I didn't understand.*

Still on the topic of his teaching style, he added:

<sup>18/</sup>*One thing I have learned to do is to slow down ... our learners we have now ... if I compare them to the learners we had a few years ago - I used to*



*have hard-working learners. <sup>19/</sup>These learners now are not as committed and it is a process to get them to the level where you want them.*

Finally, with regards to his teaching style, he explained:

*<sup>20/</sup>I hardly ever write on the board because they don't even know what I am writing. So what I do, <sup>21/</sup>I speak with them a lot. I say to them, you need to listen - you need to look so that you can understand that this is the right answer ... that is the wrong answer. I want to develop that skill in them ..... to listen. <sup>22/</sup>I do want them to take notes ...when there are formats ... this is what it looks like, you need to learn it as is. <sup>23/</sup>I write the solution on the board, but most of the time I will read it to them.*

To my question on the attitude of the learners Bryan replied:

*You know, ... <sup>24/</sup>they respect me, when I speak they listen. Behaviour wise - you can't ask for better. We have our few bad learners, but generally, we don't have major problems with our learners. <sup>25/</sup>We have more girls than boys, they excel at our school ... for me it is quite pleasing to see that these young ladies are driven to be successful.*

Still on the attitude of the learners, he added:

*<sup>26/</sup>These learners who do Accounting, we consider them to be the elite of the school - the top learners of the school. ... we have certain expectations of them. ... <sup>27/</sup>the value system that they have is different. They are on task. They want to succeed. They have a vision of moving on.*

When I asked Bryan whether they have sufficient teaching and learning materials at the school, he explained:

*We are fortunate <sup>28/</sup>Accounting learners are very responsible learners. So with regard to textbooks, they always bring their textbooks back. <sup>29/</sup>I have a data projector and a laptop that I can use, but I don't use it. I like to talk.*

*... <sup>30/</sup>the smart classes, we are supposed to be using the data projectors and those kind of things, but ... you have to carry it with you. It is a bit of a challenge. <sup>31/</sup>The teachers who are using it a lot, they are the ones who have*

*their own classes ... they can simply lock up and leave the equipment in the class – for example, the Science teachers.* <sup>32/</sup>*It is a challenge but we have the facilities available if we need to use it.*

To my question on which curriculum he used when he started to teach, Bryan replied:

<sup>33/</sup>*It was the old curriculum, the one we still used to do at school [NATED Report 550].*

His views on the content of the apartheid curriculum (NATED Report 550) versus the NCS and the CAPS are as follows:

<sup>34/</sup>*It generally stays the same, there are slight changes in terms of topics that are brought in, but they don't deviate from the standard things that we do in Accounting. So for example,* <sup>35/</sup>*the activities in Accounting which weren't there before, it was in, it was taken out, brought back again. We had Bank Reconciliation that we did in Grade 12 and now we do Interpretation. So you do it in Grade 11, but in Grade 12 it is just Interpretation of Bank Reconciliation.* <sup>36/</sup>*In the old curriculum of Higher Grade and Standard Grade, they used to ask Grade 11 work [that is, in the Grade 12 final examination] as well ... and to a large degree there was quite a lot of Grade 11 work in the Standard Grade paper [that is, in the Grade 12 final examination].* <sup>37/</sup>*Now there is still some reference to Grade 11, but the emphasis is more on what they do in Grade 12.*

He had the following to say with regards to the differences between the old and the new curricula, and how he copes with these changes. He responded annoyed:

<sup>38/</sup>*One thing that I pick up is the quality of textbooks that they have now, they don't measure up to the ones that we had that time ... Logical approach.* <sup>39/</sup>*There used to be a variety of textbooks, now you tend to find just one or two examples.* <sup>40/</sup>*I just find them ... not too challenging* <sup>41/</sup>*but then you do get other books [for example] New Era textbook ... this textbook seems to cover everything.* <sup>42/</sup>*Now you order the textbook, maybe go to the district, and then*

*all of a sudden you see that there is another textbook and nobody ever brought it to your attention ... that this other textbook is available.*

In response to my question about what the subject advisor's role/advice with regards to recommending a textbook is, he responded in a disheartened way:

*<sup>43/</sup>They can't recommend a textbook. They are not allowed to do that because they might recommend a book of a friend and get kickbacks, it is an ethical issue that they cannot recommend textbooks. The Department has an ordering system. But <sup>44/</sup>you are limited by this ordering system. They have a list of what books you ordered already. So they say ... you've got that book already. If you want to order 20 books, they say, no but you've got so many learners, you already have so many books, you can't order more. <sup>45/</sup>I therefore rely on the number of resources that I have and information that I have access to and take that and see how I can compile some exercises.*

When I enquired whether the training provided by the WCED for the CAPS was adequate, Bryan replied with a hint of annoyance:

*<sup>46/</sup>The training is never adequate. <sup>47/</sup>I found that the education department acknowledges it as well. <sup>48/</sup>Sometimes it is difficult, because when we attend a workshop on curriculum changes, we attend the one course - you are basically there for a week, five days and you are now receiving a crash course. <sup>49/</sup>Sometimes you come out of there, unsure about what is it that you were supposed to have learned, but fortunately our curriculum advisors are on standby, if you need assistance they will help you. <sup>50/</sup>For example, the section on Manufacturing - I never did this at school ... I never did it at university. The first year I did it at one of these workshops I was struggling a bit. It took me about two years to come to terms with what it is that they are asking.*

To my question on whether he thinks this is still the right profession for him, he replied emphatically:

*<sup>51/</sup>Yes, there is not a day that I come to school and say ... I don't want to be here. I get up every day ... and want to teach. <sup>52/</sup>I enjoy my subject. I love Accounting. <sup>53/</sup>And the environment in which I work gives me a sense of*

*satisfaction – although the learners may not perform well academically, they are not rude. They respect me – and that counts more than anything else.*

In the construction of the constituent profile, I identified 53 NUMs, labelled as P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>53</sub>. The P<sub>2</sub> refers to part two of the interview, after which each code follows chronologically ranging from 1 to 53. These codes will now be used to craft the descriptive narrative below as well as the interpretive narrative and anticipatory interpretive narrative, which follow below.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

In order to construct the Husserlian descriptive narrative the following themes were derived from his constituent profile to extract the essences of his experiences: (i) the impact of his training as a pre-service Accounting teacher on his perception as a teacher – here I will draw from part one of the interview in which he explained his journey as a pre-service teacher in more detail; (ii) the negative and positive aspects he experiences in teaching Accounting; (iii) his views about the district offices concerning support to effectively teach the content; and (iv) his perceptions of the latest CAPS and all previous curricula during post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

After Grade 12 Bryan enrolled for his undergraduate degree (BComm) at UCT. Upon completion of his BComm degree (in which he majored in Accounting and Economics) he *worked as an Accountant's Clerk for a retailer in Cape Town for one year and a waiter for two years* (for full details see NUMs for part one of the interview labelled P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>29-31</sub>). During those two years as a waiter he completed his teacher's qualification (HDE) at UWC, which equipped him to become *a teacher later in my life*. Whilst he was teaching at School B, he also completed the ACE: Language across the Curriculum course (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>29-32</sub>).

Bryan started his teaching career at Ravensmead High School as a Business Studies and Economics teacher in January 1997. Ravensmead High School is an Afrikaans-medium school which, on the basis of the Group Areas Act of 1950, is situated in a historically classified 'coloured neighbourhood'. Over the years Ravensmead High produced excellent Grade12 results with highly committed and

competent teachers. In March 1998, just over a year later, he started as a post-level 1 EMS teacher at School B. In addition, he taught computer classes as an extra-curricular course to some learners (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>1-2</sub>). Bryan's diligence in his work *caught the principal's eye* and he quickly advanced to Head of Department, and five years later to Deputy-Principal of School B – a position he is passionate about. This is confirmed in the statement: ... *it is quite exciting to be in top-level management ....*(P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>7-9</sub>).

On numerous occasions throughout part one of the interview Bryan mentioned the importance of being 'independent' and 'hard working' – qualities instilled in him as a child by his father. He continues to accentuate these qualities in his role as a teacher and considers this as one of the main reasons he was promoted to the post of HOD and later to Deputy-Principal. Therefore, it can be assumed that he had to work hard to get to the position of Deputy-Principal.

With regards to his teaching style, in part one of the interview Bryan explained his experiences as a pre-service Accounting teacher and revealed that his mentor taught him *about life, about children – how they are [and] how you need to teach* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>39</sub>). By using a 5-step approach to teach Accounting, he tries to follow through on the advice of his mentor by also relating it (the 5-step approach) to a general way of dealing with life's problems. The 5-step approach is illustrated in the following excerpt:

*What is the amount, what are the two accounts, do they increase or decrease, what type of accounts are they, do you debit or credit these accounts* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>14</sub>).

His strategy is to first explain the work to the learners by doing an example with them, and then to give them an exercise for homework to do on their own. He believes that the learners have to try to do the homework exercise on their own and then to come back with queries (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>15-16</sub>). His facial expression and tone indicated that he definitely is against learners not even trying to do the homework exercise. The extract labelled P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>17</sub> substantiates this statement.

Bryan believes that teaching Accounting is not about *do this, do that*. He believes that *there is a thinking process, there is a logic to it ... you can understand it if you want to understand it* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>12</sub>). In view of how he teaches Accounting (that is, by using the 5-step approach and relating this approach as a method to solve real-life problems) as well as the statement that Accounting is about logic (understanding) (see P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>12</sub>), it is clear that Bryan understands that his learners have unique educational needs in the light of the background with which they enter the learning environment<sup>16</sup> and therefore he places the learners at the centre of the educational process, thereby invoking the curriculum-as-lived (Aoki, 1999; Pinar, 2015a).

The main challenge that Bryan experiences in teaching Accounting at School B is that English is not the first language of these learners. The ACE: Languages across the Curriculum course empowered him with specific methodologies to use with learners whose first language is not English. This lead him to adopt the following approach, that is, he explains that he *hardly ever write[s] on the board because they don't even know what [he is] writing ... so, [he] speak[s] with them a lot ...* he does not want them to take notes ... and sometimes he will *write the solution on the board, but most of the time [he] will read it to them* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>20-23</sub>). He stressed that he has learned to slow down, because the learners they have now at the school are not as hard working as those they had a few years ago. Furthermore, he added that the learners are not as committed and that *it is a process to get them to the level where you want them* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>18-19</sub>).

Another challenge that Bryan experiences relating to the teaching of Accounting is that he cannot source textbooks that cover all the necessary topics. I could almost hear the irritation in his voice when he pointed out that ... nowadays *the quality of textbooks don't measure up to the ones we had that time ... Logical Approach*. He added that *there used to be a variety of textbooks, now you tend to find just one or two examples*. He does not find the current textbooks challenging enough (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>38-40</sub>). He points out that there is one particular textbook that *seems to cover everything* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>41</sub>), but he is restricted by the WCED as to the number of

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<sup>16</sup> For full details on the *background of these learners and their learning environment* see Chapter Four, section 4.3.2.

textbooks he is allowed to order (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>44</sub>). He therefore relies on the resources he has access to and then compiles exercises for his learners (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>45</sub>).

Bryan's frustration with the WCED extends to the training they provide for the CAPS. He emphatically declared that *the training is never adequate* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>46</sub>). The fact that the training on curriculum changes takes place over a period of one week (five days) upsets him. To him it seems as if it is a crash course and he is often unsure about what he was supposed to have learned. He cited the example labelled P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>50</sub>.

Amongst all the frustrations he experiences with the WCED, there is one advantage, that is, that their *curriculum advisors* are *on standby* when their assistance is needed (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>49</sub>). A few positive aspects concerning the learners who do Accounting are that they are respectful, they want to succeed and they are responsible. The excerpts labelled P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>24</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>27-28</sub> describe the attitude of the learners.

Bryan's opinion on whether the curriculum content changed over the years was that *...It generally stays the same* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>34</sub>). In the extract labelled P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>34-37</sub> he illustrates some of the minor changes in the CAPS.

Despite the challenges and concerns around the teaching of Accounting, Bryan still believes that he is in the right profession. The excerpt below supports this statement:

*Yes, there is not a day that I come to school and say ... I don't want to be here. I get up every day ... and want to teach. I enjoy my subject. I love Accounting. And the environment in which I work gives me a sense of satisfaction – although the learners may not perform well academically, they are not rude. They respect me – and that counts more than anything else* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>51-53</sub>).

#### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

As an undergraduate BComm student at UCT Bryan explained that he *had a very hard time – socially...* and that he *felt like an outsider* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>33</sub>). His way of coping

was to remind himself why he chose to study there. To cope with the challenges at UCT he would be *frantically writing down whatever the lecturer was saying and not questioning anything* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>36</sub>). Being in what was historically called a ‘white university’ with its majority of white students, and him being black, meant that he could see more details with respect to the differences in their social, cultural, political and economic conditions. These differences became so enormous that they prompted a particular outlook about the place and its people, so much so that he said *I never had a very nice experience at UCT* – as if to say he could not fit in there, so he wanted to complete his degree as quickly as he could and leave. His experiences at UCT allowed him to look at UWC with fresh eyes and new insights – a place at which he initially wanted to avoid studying at because of the political uncertainty and instability at the time.

His experiences as a pre-service teacher at UWC was different as he felt more *confident ... mature* and at home. Here the majority of the student and lecturer population looked like and talked like him. He felt more free and at home at UWC and he had the courage and enthusiasm to engage with his lecturers and to voice his opinions and concerns. He described his teaching practice experience as *very nice* because the work was also easier as opposed to his undergraduate studies. He also mentioned the role his mentor played in preparing him for the teaching of the subject. He stated that *my mentor ... would speak to me about life, and about children and how they are; how you need to teach* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>39</sub>). According to Heidegger (1971), such experiences (of feeling at home at the university and teaching in a historically coloured school in a coloured community) have the potential to wittingly and unwittingly transform a person infinitesimally or profoundly. We are ‘be-thinged’, according to Heidegger, as objects and experiences tend to inhabit, condition, and give meaning to us. In other words, the question worth asking here is: How did his experiences at UCT with its high academic standards, and as a pre-service teacher at a place called home (UWC), give meaning to his life.

His experiences at UCT illuminated his life in such a way that he knows what it feels like to look, talk and think differently. Bryan taught at a coloured school



(namely, at Ravensmead High School) for just over a year, after which he took up a post at a school in a township (School B). In township schools the majority of the teachers and almost the entire learner population are black. Apart from the language differences (he is an English-speaking mother tongue user and most of his colleagues speak IsiXhosa), he finds himself in a place that mirrors what he experienced at UCT with cultural, political and economic differences. Because of the long legacy of apartheid, township schools are surrounded by extreme poverty (something he is familiar with), with predictable lives of struggle for survival, and with incompetent and under- or unqualified teachers. Among the parent community high levels of illiteracy and innumeracy are common, with high unemployment rates. His objective is to change the system by reversing poor or low levels of education in township schools. This is substantiated when he said *we started working up to 70, 80, 90% pass rates in Accounting. ... Then we got learners who wanted to do Accounting but they were incapable of it and we decided to change the system. We chose for them ... and then there was an improvement in the results* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>11</sub>; P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>13</sub>). He further stated that *these learners now are not as committed and it is a process to get them to the level where you want them* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>19</sub>). What stands out here as figure (as foreground) is that we always speak from some kind of understanding of the world that originates in our inner consciousness. For example, when I see someone crying, the tears flowing from their eyes are assumed to be associated with some kind of deep sadness or grief, which is further associated with some kind of facial expression. Likewise, what Bryan makes evident in words and descriptions reveals something meaningful about his own personal convictions. Heidegger (1927/1967) points out that to understand someone like Bryan, careful attention must be paid to his ‘worldly’ articulation of the ontological representation of a person’s world.

As a teacher he describes himself as a *workaholic* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>10</sub>) and explains how this ‘way of being’ worked in his favour. He echoed how his principal loaded him with responsibilities, which ultimately lead to his being promoted to HOD and five years later to Deputy-Principal (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>7-8</sub>). In other words, the values such as to *help others*, to be *hard working*, to show *commitment* and to be *responsible*, which are the key criteria that his parents taught him, stood him in good stead.

These values that he demonstrates pre-reflexively inhabited him as a child and as a teenager when his father trained him to be a waiter. Unconsciously he reinterprets these values of how to act in and perceive the world of teaching.

The same can be said about how he teaches Accounting to his learners. Having been forced to become *independent* as a learner in which *he had to work on his own* and attempt to figure out the logic behind Accounting, it appears as if his objective is to instil the same qualities and expectations in his learners. This situational, relational and embodied context of lived space as a learner and student gave meaning and structure to the perceptive mindset towards the learning of Accounting, which he now seems to implement in his own classroom. He said: *A lot of it has to do with my understanding of Accounting and I think the learners appreciate it as a subject that is not just do this, do that. There is a thinking process, there is a logic to it ... you can understand it if you want to understand it* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>12-13</sub>). The key to understanding or logic, as he terms it here, is explained in the excerpt labelled P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>14</sub> (that is, the 5-step approach that he uses).

In his 5-step approach he accentuates the logic of Accounting and in the following excerpt he illustrates how he aims to achieve this objective with his learners:

*I want you to go home, read the activity, and attempt to do the answer. If I want 15 things from you, I want 15 answers. Come with that to me, right or wrong, and then I can work with you, but don't come to me and say sir I didn't understand* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>17</sub>).

What he is doing is reliving his cultural pre-understanding of his own learning. Gadamer's (1976, p. 21), explain this cultural pre-understanding when he writes as the 'conditions whereby we experience something – whereby what we encounter says something to us'. In other words, the way Bryan learned became a normative force in terms of which he judges and views the world of learning (Heidegger, 1971). He mentioned that, although he has access to a lap top and a data projector, he does not use them in his lessons. This is because he sees and understands the teaching and learning of Accounting in the light of a particular horizon of possibilities. While the use of ICT and software in the teaching of

Accounting involves slides, menus and animations, in his mind effective teaching unfolds on a blackboard, from a textbook, notes and internalised learning. This approach comes as no surprise, given the fact during his pre-service years the way his teachers and lecturers taught him is reflected in his own learning. Despite having done Information Systems at undergraduate level, he cannot seem to inhabit the idea of an e-learning classroom. His coping strategies as child and student ontologically and hermeneutically shaped his way of looking at the world, which is now reflected or illustrated in his role as an Accounting teacher.

This same explanation of *cultural pre-understanding* can be used to explain why he pointed out that he is more in favour of the traditional curriculum (NATED Report 550) and not the NCS and CAPS (to avoid excessive repetition I am not going to explain this in further detail). Bryan states that all these curricula are more or less the same, with only slight differences in the content [refer P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>34-37</sub>]. In other words, his interpretation of all the new post-apartheid curricula such as the NCS and CAPS is that they are almost identical to the NATED Report 550. The only difference that he lists is a shift in the content. According to Ball (1994), this is a common mistake made by policy makers in which they assume that teachers will adjust to new curriculum policies. Honan (2004) argues that teachers will not automatically adjust to new curriculum policies, because they (teachers) have a structuralist understanding of these policies and their reading of the text is linear and monological. In the process teachers tend to ignore the multiple meanings and varied readings of the text, as well as ignore the multidimensional nature of the text. The end result is a superficial understanding of curricula, as illustrated in Bryan's case.

This view is reinforced in his teaching style, which has not changed over the years, and the fact that his methodology is textbook bound. This is evident when he said: *...One thing that I pick up is the quality of textbooks that they have now, they don't measure up to the ones that we had that time ... Logical approach* (refer P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>38-42</sub>). This is further corroborated when he stated that *I hardly write on the board ...I say to them you need to listen so that you can understand that this is the right answer ... that is the wrong answer* (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>21-24</sub>). The

meaning behind such action is the upshot of old ideas and habits of mind that flows from the teacher. In other words, he reduces the new curricula to a technical practice which reflects how he was trained as a learner and student teacher, which speaks to the cultural pre-understanding of his actions.

To Bryan the training offered by the department is *inadequate, a crash course* and causes more confusion (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>46-50</sub>). Koopman (2017) argues that in a country like South Africa, which has experienced continuous curriculum changes over the last two decades, teachers need help with supportive long-term professional development (PD) to enhance their development and understanding of the curriculum. After 1994 the Department of Education made huge monetary contributions to improve and develop teachers through formal qualifications, such as the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and the National Postgraduate Diploma in Education (NPDE). Through such PD programmes spread over long periods (two years), teachers' understanding of the curriculum could be updated with modern and innovative teaching strategies, as well as increasing teacher content knowledge in order to foster meaningful changes in the classroom. So instead of giving teachers a *crash course*, as Bryan pointed out, this suggested two-year course might bring about change. Klein (2001) further stresses the importance of aligning the training offered to teachers with their needs in mind. This means that training teachers with a focus on addressing their challenges and concerns has the potential to disrupt their firmly held beliefs and values.

There is not one single day that Bryan regrets having chosen the teaching as a career. He loves teaching Accounting. Based on the statement, *although the learners may not perform well academically, they are not rude ... They respect me – and that counts more than anything else* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>51-53</sub>), it can be assumed that for Bryan manners count more than performing well academically.

#### d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Dahlberg (2006), drawing from Merleau-Ponty's book entitled *The visible and the invisible*, avers that everything a person represents and believes in, for example,

their beliefs, values that guide them in their thinking, is so because of their lifeworld. An individual's lifeworld is broader and wider than his lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). Lived experience is a subset of an individual's lifeworld which includes his personal thoughts and ideas arrived at through experiences (lived through); the thoughts and ideas that his parents, teachers and lecturers instilled in him are all caught up in his soul. Dahlberg interprets Merleau-Ponty by affirming:

A being that is not posited because it has no need to be, because it is silently behind all our affirmations, negations, and even behind all formulated questions, not that it is a matter of imprisoning it in our chatter, but because philosophy is the reconversion of silence and speech into one another: It is the experience ... still mute which we are concerned with leading to the pure expression of its own meaning (2006, p 3).

In the light of the above quotation, Bryan's expressions about *hard work* (which he learned from his father as a child) that turned him into a *workaholic*, being *respectful, responsible and loyal* at all times (which he learned from his mother), his views about how he teaches and thinks, how he feels Accounting should be taught, and his views about the curriculum, and why he prefers the apartheid curriculum above the NCS and the CAPS can be seen as the invisible and mute fabric of meaning. The strongly held beliefs and values with their meanings stand out as figure (as foreground) against his actions. Consequently, the visible cannot be understood without its invisible side, in the same way as the invisible cannot be understood without the visible figure, which now has become background. So, when Bryan explains his teaching strategies and expresses his views about the curriculum, old habits of mind (invisible) and ideas dominate his thinking because that which was indeterminate (that which he did not understand) are made determinate, through experience. For example, referring to his 5-step teaching method (in his own words) *A lot of it* (referring to his teaching style) *has to do with my understanding of Accounting* [and] *I think the learners appreciate it as a subject that is not just do this, do that. There is a thinking process, there is a logic to it...* (P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>12-13</sub>; P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>15-20</sub>). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, it is possible that Bryan's views about how he teaches (as well as

other phenomena, such as his views about the curriculum and so forth) can also be explained using the ‘intentional arc’ as a way of getting a ‘maximum grip’ on reality. According to this principle, significant experiences of how he picked up information about Accounting (at school, university, and his own understanding of it as an Accounting clerk) became his own personal way of how he thinks Accounting should be learned. These experiences can be seen as kinds of mechanisms whereby the sense organs receive and transmit information passively to the brain in different stages until it formulates Bryan’s perceptions. This means (and the same can be argued to explain his perception of the curricula) now that he is a teacher, his perceptual world remained the same and he did not update his representation of the world. This claim is substantiated in his word *these curricula* (NATED Report 550, NCS and CAPS) *they are all the same*. Evident here is the fact that he is not updating his world of understanding, but rather updating the world which now looks different to the one he is familiar with.

## **5.7 Research participant: Claire**

### **5.7.1 Part one of the interview**

#### **a) Constructing the constituent profile**

When I arrived at School C, and reported to reception, before I could even finish saying ‘I’m here to see Claire’, the receptionist said ‘I know. She is waiting for you’. I noticed a pale, tall, solidly built white lady approaching me. She greeted me with a friendly but reserved smile, and said, *we will be using one of the quieter offices*. Still in awe with the spaces, beautiful entrance and reception area of the school, I followed Claire. En route to the office she confirmed, *so you are busy with your PhD?* ‘Yes’, I replied. *At which university?* she continued. ‘Stellenbosch’ I replied proudly. By this time we reached the office. I immediately prepared my audio-recorder, notepad and interview schedule for the interview.

I started the interview by asking Claire to give a brief overview of the community in which she was raised, the school she attended as a learner, and the influence of her parents in her to life. She responded as follows:

<sup>1/</sup>I grew up in Vereeniging, specifically the Vaal Triangle, where I went to an Afrikaans[-medium] school - both primary and secondary - and everybody was sort of conservative and Afrikaans speaking. <sup>2/</sup>As children I can recollect how we used to play together in the street. <sup>3/</sup>That time children grew up to be seen and not heard. That is the community in which I grew up. <sup>4/</sup>My father was a teacher, so he was very involved with us. <sup>5/</sup>He actually taught Maths, and he is also in the Commerce field. <sup>6/</sup>He was a deputy headmaster at school and he only taught Grade 8s [at that time] - Standard 6s.

She continued to tell me about her parents:

<sup>7/</sup>My mother, on the other hand, was a housewife. <sup>8/</sup>My mom, was very handy and she can do anything with her hands, very good at cooking but she is not a people's person. She is sort of, more reserved. <sup>9/</sup>Ja, she was a perfectionist, while my father was more of a people's person. <sup>10/</sup>He was actually very hard working and he <sup>11/</sup>enjoyed what he did. <sup>12/</sup>That is why since I was in Grade 1, the only thing that I wanted to do was to become a teacher. <sup>13/</sup>So, I had a very positive attitude towards teaching ... it was never negative. <sup>14/</sup>My dad was with us, at that stage you don't really realise it, because you are only a child, but holiday time he was at home. I didn't have to stay somewhere else, I was never alone at home. <sup>15/</sup>A time I looked forward to spending with him. So, no it was very positive for me.

To my question on her first engagement with Accounting and how she experienced it, she replied:

High school obviously. <sup>16/</sup>My father taught Accounting so I choose it. I remember I was very fond of our Accounting teacher [smiling], Grade 10 to 12. <sup>17/</sup>You sort of stayed with the same teacher in your senior years. <sup>18/</sup>In Grade 9, when we started with Accounting, I now remember, first it was difficult to grasp the concepts, but <sup>19/</sup>I remember when my dad said, once you've grasped it you will be fine, then you will get close to full marks for it, because then it is easy - Grade 9. <sup>20/</sup>And yes, because I like numbers, that was obviously a subject that I wanted to take.



When I enquired why she (Claire) liked her Accounting teacher so much and how she taught the subject, she explained:

*<sup>21/</sup>The way it was taught back then, was very different to these days, they still used the blackboard, or the chalkboard, drawing it [drawing the lines of the journals], <sup>22/</sup>we didn't use any calculators back then. The year after we left, they were allowed to start using calculators, so we had to do all the calculations, the percentages, everything you had to work out yourself without a calculator. <sup>23/</sup>You still worked on those folios, the 8-column Cash Book, we didn't get these answer sheets that they have nowadays. <sup>24/</sup>But the way it was taught, was very simple. This is the information, this is the exercise. You do it, we mark it. It's as simple as that.*

When asked whether the influence of her Accounting teacher, whom she loved, contributed towards her choice to become an Accounting teacher, she said:

*<sup>25/</sup>Ja, but it was obviously my dad. Because I grew up in a household where he was a teacher and for me it was a very positive experience. <sup>26/</sup>So, in 1987 I went to the military for one year and in 1988 I started with my first year at university. 1988, 1989, 1990 I did my BComm degree, and <sup>27/</sup>then in 1991 I did my education diploma. So I didn't study education, <sup>28/</sup>I studied BComm with Maths and Accounting and Economics, and then I did the HDE. All these qualifications were completed at the University of Pretoria.*

When asked to explain the type of training she received as a pre-service Accounting teacher, she responded as follows:

*<sup>29/</sup>I had Maths second year, and Economics third year however I didn't do my teaching in Economics but in Maths and Accounting. <sup>30/</sup>They can't really teach you in the classroom ... outside of putting you in a classroom, so you have to study on your own to know the work. <sup>31/</sup>Yes, we had times that we did practicals at schools, but you really start learning how to teach when you are standing in front of the class. It is like getting your driver's license, you know how to drive, but you only start really learning how to drive once you've got your license and you must make all the decisions yourself.*



In an attempt to gather more detail with respect to the content covered in the curriculum as a pre-service Accounting teacher and the teaching strategies her lecturers applied, I asked Claire to elaborate on her classroom experiences. She described her experiences as follows:

*<sup>32/</sup>They did the school syllabus then and also helped you how to teach in a small way, that was the focus, <sup>33/</sup>but yes, they made you know the work so that you can teach it on school level ... <sup>34/</sup>You may be educated up to the third year in your subject, but you do it at the school level. So that was what they concentrated on. <sup>35/</sup>Also, they did not even explain the work in our lectures. We were just told what to do and we did it. That is how they taught us at university ....*

In the construction of Claire's constituent profile of part one of the interview, a total of 35 NUMs were coded and labelled as P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>35</sub>. P<sub>1</sub> refers to part one of the interview, after which each code follows chronologically ranging from 1 to 35. These codes formed the basis for the descriptive narrative, which will be discussed next, to be followed by the interpretive narrative and anticipatory narrative.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

In order to report the object of her consciousness, I focused mainly on what Husserl (1970) calls 'the things in themselves' when constructing Claire's constituent profile. Central to the object of her consciousness as a child are: (i) her place of birth and where she grew up; (ii) her fond memories and impact of her father on her becoming; (iii) the role her school teacher played regarding her perceptiveness about Accounting as a school subject; and (iv) the training she received as a pre-service Accounting teacher.

Claire grew up in the 1970s in Vereeniging, a small city in Gauteng province. Under apartheid Gauteng province was called the Transvaal. The name 'Vereeniging' is a Dutch word meaning 'union'. It was named in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after De Zuid Afrikaanshe en Oranje Vrystaatsche Kolen and Mineralen Vereeniging. Vereeniging was one of the most important industrial

manufacturing centres in South Africa, of which the chief products were iron, steel, tiles, and processed lime. This city is also known as the place where the Treaty of Vereeniging was negotiated and signed at the end of the Second Boer War in 1902. In essence Vereeniging was one of many places reserved for the ‘Afrikaner volk’<sup>17</sup> under apartheid. Claire stated that she was born and raised in Vereeniging and completed both her primary and secondary schooling there. She described the place as *a conservative Afrikaans town* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub>) and describes the city as a place where children were valued, when she said: *As children I can recollect how we used to play together in the streets. That time children grew up to be seen and not heard.*

Claire’s father was the *deputy headmaster*, who was also a *Commerce and Mathematics teacher* while her mother was a *housewife*. She describes her father as a man who was passionate about his work when she said *he enjoyed his work and was very hard working* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>10-11</sub>). She describes her mother, although a housewife, as a *perfectionist, very good at cooking but not a people’s person* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>8-9</sub>), a term she says better describes her father (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>9</sub>). Claire pays her father the highest compliment when she said that his passion for his work rubbed off on her and that his influence was the main reason she became a teacher. This claim is substantiated when she said: *That is why since I was in Grade 1, the only thing that I wanted to do was to become a teacher. So, I had a very positive attitude towards teaching, it was never negative.* Furthermore, she pointed out how wonderful it was to be around her father during school holidays ... a time she looked forward to spending with him (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>14-15</sub>). The fact that she admired her father and liked working with numbers were also the reasons she chose Accounting as a school subject in high school (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>16</sub>; P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>20</sub>).

She describes her first encounter with Accounting in Grade 9 as *difficult*, but the words of her father echoed in her mind: *I remember when my dad said, once you’ve grasped it you will be fine, then you will get close to full marks for it, because then it is easy – Grade 9.* Concerning her Accounting teacher, smilingly she said: *I remember I was very fond of our Accounting teacher.* She continued,

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<sup>17</sup> Afrikaner volk: a term which refers to the Afrikaans people (nation)

... we had the same teacher for Grades 10 to 12 [back then Standards 8 to 10]. When asked to elaborate on her experience of how her Accounting teacher taught the subject at high school, she said: *we were not allowed to use a calculator... so we had to do all the calculations, the percentages, everything you had to work out ... the way it was taught, was very simple. This is the information, this is the exercise. You do it, we mark it. It's as simple as that* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>21-24</sub>). They were given many exercises to do in class and if they could not complete them in class, they had to continue with the work at home. Upon completion of these activities, her teacher would work through the exercises with them to assess whether their answers were right or wrong. When asked if the fact that she stated *I love my Accounting teacher* influenced her decision to become an Accounting teacher she said, *Ja*, but it was the influence and impact that her father had on her life. To Claire her father was her role model and hero.

After completing her schooling, she spent one year (1988) at the military school. She then enrolled for her BComm degree at the University of Pretoria (UP), which she completed in 1991. During her three-year BComm programme she majored in Mathematics, Accounting and Economics (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>27-28</sub>). Upon completion of her BComm she enrolled for the HDE (Higher Diploma in Education), also at UP, where she majored in Accounting and Mathematics as school subjects. Throughout the HDE course they had to study most of the content on their own. She commented on this: *unlike today, where you [the teacher] must do all the work*. Claire points out that she learned the skill of teaching in the same way (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>29-31</sub>). This claim is substantiated when she said: *you really start learning how to teach when you are standing in front of the class*.

She also pointed out that the curriculum they followed in her HDE programme was basically school work, which they covered up to the third-year level. She said, *You may be educated up to the third year in your subject, but you do it at the school level*. The lecturers at university followed the same teaching approach as her Accounting school teacher. This method was that they were given the work and had to work through the activities, which they were later tested on in class and again in a more formal examination.

Drawing from Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory' juxtaposed with Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'lived body theory', the object of Claire's consciousness as a child was informed and shaped by everything around her existence, namely, the area in which she grew up, and the silent voices of her father, mother, Accounting teacher and university lecturers. These role players constituted the flesh of her world, which connects everything else. The role players are so present in her that her gestures as part of responses reveal her immediate connectedness to them. Behind all her formulated responses, affirmations, negativity, positivity, gestures and so forth that form the substance of her consciousness is a reconversion of silences and speeches of her father, and voices of teachers. For example, *since Grade 1 I wanted to become a teacher...because of my father ... once you grasped these concepts you will be fine..., I was very fond of our Accounting teacher, unlike today, where you must do all the work*, substantiate this claim. What was silent in her consciousness (not verbalised) were the pure expressions of her own thoughts and perceptions of the world. As a phenomenological researcher I am fully aware that there is always 'more to it', but what I am describing – and which is central to the phenomenological analysis – is the speaking from 'somewhere' as revealed in 'the things themselves' as a basis for the phenomenological reduction.

#### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Drawing from Heidegger's (1927/1967) concept of *Dasein*, with its focus on ontology (being) and context or 'place', I first draw parallels between the researcher (that is, myself) as a coloured South African and the research participant classified as 'White' under apartheid. This is because apartheid, as an ideology, permeated 'every aspect of our lives' to such an extent that lived space in the 1970s and 1980s was a racial topology. With 'every aspect of our lives' I mean at the social, cultural, economic and political dimension of every South African's life. This means that, although Claire and I grew up in the same era in the 1970s and 1980s, we had very little in common on a social, cultural, economic and political level. While Claire, as a white female, growing up in a 'conservative Afrikaner town' (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1-2</sub>), attended a historically designated 'model C' school and studied at a conservative Afrikaans university reserved for whites during that

time, I grew up in a coloured neighbourhood, speaking the language of the colonialist and attended an institution for higher learning reserved for coloureds (non-whites). Seeing that our worlds did not intersect as children, my epistemic roots or alethic orientation to white children under apartheid originates from the distressing stories of my parents and teachers, books, and later when I enrolled for my training as a teacher in course work material I also learned more about whites and the racial tensions in South Africa. It was at university where I was made aware on an academic level of the political, sociological, psychological, ideological and metaphysical realm of ‘whiteness’ as a position of privilege. Therefore the interpretive narrative in this section has a theoretical and not a social valence to the lived space of ‘whiteness’, which I think Claire is inadvertently conveying from the depths of her mind. As Dahlstrom (2005) puts it: ‘Someone can see a patch of red but it is only epistemically relevant, that is, relevant to determinations of truth, when she self-consciously conceives and judges it to be red’ (p. 2).

Building on the descriptive narrative (explained in section 5.7.1 (b) above) by expanding the same themes to an interpretive narrative of Claire’s lived world experiences during childhood and early adulthood means explicating how subject-and-world in the midst-of-the-world resonates with Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein*. The existential analysis of *Dasein* (as *Da-sein* – ‘being there’ or ‘there being’) as a source of fundamental ontology is a question of clarifying the sense of ‘being’ not in a global sense as a ‘being in transcendence’ but rather in the ‘transcendence of the being’, that is, ‘being here’, which in the context of this study refers to her childhood - growing up in Vereeniging.

Claire grew up in Vereeniging (South Africa) in the 1970s and 1980s during a time when whites were given the status of ‘masters’ and ‘madams’ in the worst years of racial oppression and ‘states of emergency’. She came across as a true patriot when she pointed out that, although military training was not compulsory for girls, she first completed one year of military training after school before enrolling at university. Given the political order of the day, Vereeniging is remembered as a community that upheld and supported apartheid and

subsequently also benefitted directly from white domination during the 1970s to early 1990s. The fact that she was raised under apartheid makes it understandable why Claire mirrors the beliefs of her parents.

What clearly stands out in Claire's lived world, as echoed in her constituent profile, is how her mother's and father's valuational matrices serve as a filter through which she as an individual interprets the world. She does this in some kind of religious way, or what Heidegger (2002) calls an 'ontic' transcendental way. According to Heidegger (2002), 'ontic transcendence' entails choosing one way of living over another. Metaphorically ontic transcendence can be seen as a paradigmatic shift in which the Christian notion with God as the Supreme Being becomes an inherent part of life. In the same, almost religious manner, she complements both her mother and her father, which reflects the intergenerational transmission of both spoken (father) and unspoken (mother) knowledge. This is substantiated by the claim that *my father was a teacher so he was very involved with us*. She continues, *since then, I knew all I wanted to be since Grade 1, was to be a teacher*. She added *so, I had a very positive attitude towards teaching, it was never negative*. Her mother exemplified the role of someone who carefully modelled the principle of perfectionism in her daily affairs, while her father inspired her to give her best and to work hard. Therefore, her father (more than her mother) can be viewed as the inspirational and motivational figure in her life.

She attended schools that were reserved for whites. These schools were well resourced and adopted policies, curricula and syllabic content that promoted a technical knowledge. In other words, this knowledge did not aim to challenge children intellectually about the nature, history, politics and purposes in their disciplines, instead it focused on the memorisation of concepts and definitions. This claim is substantiated in the statement labelled P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>21-24</sub>.

She pointed out that she was very fond of her Accounting teacher. The way this teacher taught the subject was *very simple*. Her teaching strategy was the same as that of her lecturers at university: *This is the information, this is the exercise. You do it, we mark it* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>24</sub>). This method seems to advocate a social pedagogy of

principle in which learners are forced to take responsibility for their work. What Claire reports is that the teaching strategy her Accounting teacher and university lecturers employed focused more on the learners' and/or students' perspectives rather than on teaching. By so doing, the teacher promoted a 'social pedagogy' in which she encouraged the learners to compare notes and answers. Furthermore, during class time when the teacher worked through the exercise with the learners, their (the learners') answers influenced the direction of the lesson. How this method reflects in her (own) personal teaching style will be discussed in the interpretive narrative of the second interview.

c) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

For Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), and for Claire, embodied existence has a double meaning. On the one side, the body can be viewed as a lived and experiential structure, in conjunction with the other side as a milieu of cognitive mechanisms. Claire's experiences, as revealed through her childhood memories, take on a very stable position about life both in the community in which she was raised and the role her father and school teachers played in her life. Through embodied space (and the influences in her childhood) these role players created the equilibrium of her existence. This stability and outlook on life are evident in her declarations, such as *I grew up ... in a conservative community ... during a time when children were seen and not heard ... my father was a hard worker ... that's why I decided to become a teacher ... I always had a positive attitude...*, and so forth. These statements not only expose her visceral 'habits of embodiment', but accentuate well-crafted structures that shaped her life. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), it is evident that the combined values that her community, father, mother and school teachers imparted in her life provided the poles of action that can also be interpreted as habit. Phenomenological researchers agree that habit refers to a 'way of having a world'. Therefore her body should be viewed as having a world polarised and shaped by her father. This claim is corroborated by her response to the question of whether the role her Accounting teacher played informed her decision to become a teacher, ... *Ja, but it was obviously my dad ...* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>25</sub>).



Throughout the first part of the interview Claire also frequently used the phrase '*back then*' as if her 'memory-image' became her 'perceptive-image'. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), a person's perceptive image guides the body in the world as it moves between 'indeterminacy' and 'determinacy'. This means that when a person is introduced to new experiences or foreign objects, he or she has an unstable perception of the situation or object. As the body connects with the space or object in search for the best position or body-set to allow the senses to unlock the hidden horizons of the situation or objects, indeterminacy shifts to determinacy. In other words, the person comes to a new understanding, drawn from insights based on the past, as the body embodies the space. By so doing, our perceptive nature of the world evolves with time; consequently, this leads to a stable perceptive 'outlook' or 'understanding' of images, phenomena and experiences in the world. Relating this indeterminacy and determinacy to Claire's childhood, she pointed out how involved her father and mother were in her life as a child. So much so that she chose to study Accounting as a school subject and later became an Accounting teacher. These choices mirror her father's life. Her indeterminacy in the situation and choices shifted to a position of determinacy in which the 'conditions of existence' as a child anticipated her becoming. In other words, the world of her father shaped the richness of her psychological, political, social and cultural disposition of space. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) writes:

The relationships 'figures' and 'backgrounds', 'things' and 'nothing', and the horizon of the past appear, then, to be structures of consciousness irreducible to the qualities which appear in them ... The figure and the background, the thing and its surrounding, the present and the past, are words which summarize the experience of a spatio-temporal perspective, which in the end comes down to the elimination either of memory or of the marginal impressions. Even though, once formed in actual perception structures have more meaning than is apparent in quality, I am not entitled to regard this evidence of consciousness as adequate; I must reconstruct theoretically these structures with the aid of the impressions whose actual relationships they express (pp. 22-23).



These conditions of existence which influenced her indeterminate perceptions as a child can also be understood as the structures that shape her expectation or anticipation of how she thinks objects in the world behave. She also depicts her father as a motivational character in her life (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>18-20</sub>). According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), motivation is not a ‘cause’ nor is it a ‘reason’. ‘Cause’ and ‘reason’ come from a world of determinateness, an understanding of the world that a child does not yet possess. This is because ‘causes’ are derived from sensations, as a form of connectedness to the world, while ‘reason’ causes an individual to think in a specific way. He describes motivation as a response to some kind of solicited speech that gives a person some form of premature understanding of a phenomenon that ultimately gives rise to determinancy. In other words, although the person does not have a full grasp of an issue, the motivational speech serves as a motive to anticipate behaviour. Motive, through motivational solicitation, brings stability to an unstable image in the perceptual field. This is the silent language through which perception communicates with us (as meaning-given) without us having some connection with it or with the world. Drawing from my experiences as a child, I know that in our everyday engagement with the world there are things that we do not see clearly nor can we make any sense of some experiences. This happens because we are too close to certain phenomena or too far from them, which in both cases destabilises our perception. To get perspective, we either have to take a step back or forward, and find a body-set that can help us see those hidden horizons. At times those closest to us (those whom we trust) help us to remove the images that distort our visual field. Although Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962) notion of perception teaches us that meaning is infinite and contextual, from Claire’s experiences we see that the body can also be used as an object to drive an agenda over which we have no control.

Lastly, the way in which she was taught Accounting as a learner and university student speaks of a pedagogy of privilege. This is corroborated when she said *This is the information, this is the exercise. You do it, we mark it. It’s as simple as that* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>21-24</sub>) and *We were just told what to do and we did it. That is how they taught us at university* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>32-35</sub>). Their teaching style and approach to learning seem to have laudable intentions. Beyond these intentions lie assumptions and

beliefs that the learner will understand what needs to be done and subsequently will do it. This pedagogy highlights two important aspects: (i) the normativity of whiteness – this refers to the unconscious way in which white people uncritically accept the privileges that come with being white and act accordingly; and (ii) there were no issues of diversity given the apartheid system in the 1980s. In addition to these aspects, the social analysis of this pedagogical approach raises the following salient points: (i) the teacher created a critical climate in the classroom – this refers to the concepts that are understood differently are debated; (ii) facilitating learner engagement; and (iii) provides pedagogical direction for the learners and students. How these aspects will be anticipated in her own journey as a teacher will be discussed in the second interview.

#### 5.7.2 Part two of the interview

##### a) Constructing the constituent profile

As an introduction to the second part of the interview I immediately enquired about her professional journey as an Accounting teacher and asked her to describe her experiences as a beginner in-service teacher. She responded:

*<sup>1/</sup>I started teaching in 1992 in an Afrikaans-medium high school in Pretoria as an Accounting teacher. <sup>2/</sup>There I just had to find things on my own. <sup>3/</sup>But I had this lady next to me and she was the Accounting teacher, so she helped me. <sup>4/</sup>I started with Grade 10s the first year and then she left, she left teaching, I think. <sup>5/</sup>And then I was the only one teaching Accounting. So I was very much on my own. <sup>6/</sup>And the next year I had to take the Grade 12s and obviously the Grades 10 and 11s. <sup>7/</sup>So we only had the one Accounting teacher and that was me. <sup>8/</sup>So yes, you learn at subject gatherings when you have everything, so you knew in this year, in this grade, this is what you do.*

In order to get an idea of any emotional turbulence or fears she might have experienced as a beginner teacher, I asked her to explain what she found most challenging and how she dealt with it. She said:

*Wow, I can still remember it like yesterday. <sup>10/</sup>We had to set exam papers, and those days, it was Higher Grade, Standard Grade and Lower Grade and*

*for the Grade 8s and 9s you had Ordinary Grade and Lower Grade. So that was thirteen papers that you had to set all by yourself for an exam or for a test. <sup>11/</sup>There was nobody else teaching Accounting so it was difficult working on your own, doing all of that. <sup>12/</sup>I just encouraged myself to do it, with no help. I kept on telling myself you just had to learn very quickly.*

I continued by asking her how she felt emotionally about the fact that she had no mentor and had to do most of the learning through experience, and she said:

*<sup>13/</sup>Partly, it is also by choice. <sup>14/</sup>I don't need somebody to tell me, what I must and can do. <sup>15/</sup>If I really wanted to, obviously I can ask. But I learned to do research, I can see what there is, that I want to do more. <sup>16/</sup>So I really did not have any bad memories or negative emotions, because I learned more by doing most of the stuff on my own.*

From her administrative challenges and concerns, I shifted the interview to focus on the classroom experiences and her engagement with the learners. I asked her to explain how she taught the content to her learners and whether they were able to connect with her and whether or not they could understand the work. She responded as follows:

*It was only Afrikaans children and ja [yes], <sup>17/</sup>you taught with the text book, <sup>18/</sup>not showing a lot but they were able to listen, to comprehend and to do. <sup>19/</sup>These days, kids must see something. <sup>20/</sup>They can't really just bargain on just hearing something, they must see it. <sup>21/</sup>So back then, it was very much on the black board, ja and we do the work and they work on their own, <sup>22/</sup>the children was sort of ... more disciplined.*

So how long did you stay at this school, when and why did you leave the school and where did you go to after leaving Pretoria? She replied:

*<sup>23/</sup>I stayed seven years at this school. But then my husband was transferred and I had to look for a job. <sup>24/</sup>At Pretoria I also started teaching Computer Science because that was also one of my subjects. <sup>25/</sup>When I moved to Cape Town, Bellville Technical High School was looking for somebody to start with Computer Studies and also somebody <sup>26/</sup>to start with the juniors, Grades 8 and 9 for Accounting. So I started Grade 8 Accounting, and then I*

also <sup>27/</sup>helped with Maths because it was a Technical High School, everybody must have Maths, so I taught Maths there as well and then Computer Studies. <sup>28/</sup>I started the Computer Studies there. <sup>29/</sup>I stayed at this school for two years (1999-2000), because I wanted to teach Accounting. <sup>30/</sup>That was sort of my favourite subject, and they didn't offer it at that stage. <sup>31/</sup>The department said no, because they are a technical high school, they can't go on to, Grade 10, 11 and 12 with Accounting. <sup>32/</sup>So I decided, no, I don't want to stay there, and I just <sup>33/</sup>applied for a job, as close to home as possible.

Because they did not offer Accounting at the school, I moved the interview to her experiences at the school she has been teaching at for the last 16 years. I first asked her to give me her position at the school and a breakdown of the EMS team, followed by their department structure at the school. She responded:

<sup>34/</sup>*I am the Head of Department for the EMS (Commerce) Department.*

Concerning her EMS team at school she said:

<sup>35/</sup>*There are people that are only doing Business Studies, Economics and Accounting in the GET Band (Grades 8 to 9). <sup>36/</sup>So we have three teachers in the GET Band that only do the Accounting part of EMS as a subject. <sup>37/</sup>We split the subject up. <sup>38/</sup>There is another teacher that can also teach Accounting, but we bring her in every third year. <sup>39/</sup>So we actually have four qualified Accounting teachers.*

Given the fact that they have such a big team of EMS teachers I immediately slipped in the question with tongue in cheek: 'So you don't have problems with learners entering the FET phase?' She explained as follows:

<sup>40/</sup>*No, <sup>41/</sup>the only problem is the syllabus. At the beginning when they started with this OBE thing, they sort of took Accounting out of EMS. <sup>42/</sup>They started with the EMS and Accounting was only a very, very small part of the syllabus, then they put it back again. <sup>43/</sup>But if you think about Grade 8, you only do Service Enterprise, <sup>44/</sup>then in Grade 9 you must do Trading Enterprise, Cash Sales, Credit Sales, Credit Purchases, and Cash Purchases. <sup>45/</sup>That is a lot of work for the Grade 9s to cover. Also the*

*amount of work that they cover in Grades 8 and 9 doesn't really give you an idea of what lies ahead in Grade 10. <sup>46/</sup>In this syllabus you sit with people, they did good in Grade 9 and they think they are going to take the subject and they are going to do good in it, <sup>47/</sup>but then in Grade 10 they realise, well they have the background or they don't have enough knowledge because the content is not ... for Accounting ... is not enough in Grades 8 and 9.*

'How do you think the department can solve this dilemma or concern?' I asked. She offered the following solution:

*<sup>48/</sup>Grade 9 is fine, but they can move some of that [content] down to Grade 8, start with the Trading Enterprise in Grade 8, so that you have room and time to do more in Grade 9. <sup>49/</sup>And they can put more into the Grade 9, if they shift that to Grade 8, then you have more time available in Grade 9, and yes then you can go further ... you can go to Financial Statements and you can go to more than what we are currently doing in Grade 9.*

When asked about the other challenges, fears and concerns she has regarding the Accounting curriculum, she responded in a distressed tone:

*<sup>50/</sup>Another major crisis we are facing is that from next year onwards, if a learner takes Accounting in Grade 10, he or she must take pure Maths. <sup>51/</sup>Currently almost a third of our Grade 12s do Maths Literacy in our school. <sup>52/</sup>So the numbers for Accounting are going to drop. This change is sort of a big headache for us and I really don't see why a child needs pure Maths to do Accounting. <sup>53/</sup>Maybe they only want the stronger pupils to take Accounting, but then our numbers will drop.*

She continued:

*<sup>54/</sup>I think they only cater for those who want to become CAs (Chartered Accountants) or Professional Accountants <sup>55/</sup>but what about that child that wants to leave Matric with a good background in Accounting Principles, you can go for a course in Pastel or whatever, because you still need Accounting Principles. I know the computers are doing everything, but you are still the one who tells the computer what to do and if there is a problem, something is not balancing, then you must start drawing your T-accounts so that you*

*know, you need the background but that is not available anymore for those kids.*

These statements allowed me to approach the curricular issues that directly affected her. I asked her to give her views about the continual changes that teachers have been facing over the last few years with the introduction of OBE up until the CAPS curriculum. She responded:

*<sup>56/</sup>It is never easy to change, because you get set in your ways, <sup>57/</sup>but I think change is good if it is the benefit of the child. <sup>58/</sup>You don't change just for the sake of changing, and yes teachers adapt actually easier than you think we do. <sup>59/</sup>This is what we must do now and then you do it, <sup>60/</sup>but to know how this affects the child is the more difficult part. We don't know.*

She continued:

*<sup>61/</sup>See, with the CAPS in Accounting, there wasn't that much change from the previous syllabus to CAPS, <sup>62/</sup>but the one before CAPS, that one (the NCS), that was the big challenge. <sup>63/</sup>The NCS did not differentiate between the weaker and the stronger learner. <sup>64/</sup>For example, we had Analysis and Interpretation ... it was sort of ... if they ask a ratio, they just had to remember the calculation if there was something like that in the question paper. <sup>65/</sup>This curriculum was more for the Higher Grade learner. Nowadays you must know which ratio to do, you must know what it says, what it means when you calculate it, what does it say, you must also know which financial indicator to look for, they don't tell you, calculate this one, and then comment, they just ask you the question. <sup>66/</sup>So it is really very difficult for the kids, and then to teach the weaker learner ... is very difficult.*

To my question on how she dealt with the challenges posed by the NCS, she responded:

*<sup>67/</sup>We learn by repetition, so you do more and more exercises. <sup>68/</sup>Nowadays there is a lot of question papers available for them as well, on the internet, I showed them where to go, to find these question papers with the memos, with the answer books as well, so that they can really prepare, so there are enough resources these days for the kids without having their parents buying*

*some study guide,<sup>69/</sup> just by working out old question papers. <sup>70/</sup>This is also the approach I use in my classrooms today with the CAPS.*

I followed up on this question by asking her to explain how the kind of children that she taught has changed over the years. She described how the learners changed as follows:

*<sup>71/</sup>These kids come to high school and they can't even read. This is not only in my subject but in all subjects. Reading with comprehension ... that is our biggest problem. In Accounting you have the transaction ... you have to read the transaction and know what it means. If they don't read with understanding ... they don't really understand the question. But you, as a teacher, also continue to grow. <sup>72/</sup>So you can't stay where you are ... you must continually change, continually find new ways of teaching, maybe the same content, but just a different way for these kids, how they will be able to remember, how they will be able to grasp. <sup>73/</sup>The basics of the discipline are not there anymore. <sup>74/</sup>These problems come from home, it is not a school problem, it's a home problem - <sup>75/</sup>where kids grow up without discipline. <sup>76/</sup>Some kids grow up without a dad or a mom, the number of divorces, ja, (sighing) so it is very difficult for us. <sup>77/</sup>I think for the child, you can't compare our time when we were small kids, with kids these days. <sup>78/</sup>Sometimes they have to take responsibility for a smaller brother or sister ... that we didn't have. So ja, but I think that is not a school problem.*

Concerning her relationship with the kids she teaches, she said:

*<sup>79/</sup>Most of the time I have to motivate them. It's like, I don't have my books here today, so what. I don't have it, so what. <sup>80/</sup>And then they cannot fail more than once in a phase, the kids know that now. So, if I failed Grade 8, I had to do Grade 8 again, but [nowadays] at the end of the year, they must put me through to Grade 9 and then they must put me through to Grade 10. <sup>81/</sup>Yes, they (learners) will get stuck at Grade 12 level, but they have this attitude of why must we get stuck there?*

When asked if they as teachers received any training from the DBE for the shift from the NCS to the CAPS, she explained:



<sup>82/</sup>*We had training for Accounting specifically but the positive side of that was there wasn't much change from the old syllabus to the CAPS.* <sup>83/</sup>*I remember with the training, we did with SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union) where they just highlighted the differences, between the old and new things.* <sup>84/</sup>*So it was not as if they started from the beginning and tried to train you in Accounting as a whole, just the new things, because they assumed that the teachers sitting here are already teaching Accounting and they already know what is going on.* <sup>85/</sup>*So, that was very valuable ...* <sup>86/</sup>*and the material that they made available from the Department's side, they really provided us with so much information.* <sup>87/</sup>*All the text books, all the different spread sheets, nowadays that you do the marks on ... so you really can't say you don't know what to do in class.* <sup>88/</sup>*And the support that you get from your Curriculum Advisor, the amount of work that they put into schools is amazing.*

She further explained additional training offered by the DBE:

<sup>89/</sup>*I can't speak for the other subjects, but for Accounting it was definitely focused, all the training.* <sup>90/</sup>*If there is Cash Flow Statements at some stage, and it was difficult for the teachers, then they arranged training for that and they give you material, they discuss it with you, practical, and hands-on training.* <sup>91/</sup>*We get a lot of help from the department.*

Concerning support from the principal and the school management team, she had the following to say:

<sup>92/</sup>*We have a very supportive principal, so we have no problems.* <sup>93/</sup>*We all have either a data projector or a television screen in your class.* <sup>94/</sup>*At one stage we had a choice, whether you want a television, because some teachers rather prefer the television thing, and others they have an overhead projector, or a data projector.* <sup>95/</sup>*Most of the teachers have their own laptops, but there is a computer in every classroom.* <sup>96/</sup>*So if you don't have your own laptop, then there is a computer, but not all teachers use it. At some stage, parties from outside the school donated or gave the laptops - years ago - with the interactive boards.*



To my final question as to whether she thinks that teaching is still the right profession for her, she responded with zeal:

*<sup>97/</sup>Yes, every morning when I open my classroom door, there is that smell, and I can't explain to anybody, but it is that classroom smell that this is where I must be. Yes, sometimes you get frustrated, ... some days are better than others, ... that is in every profession ... But I still feel this is where I should be. Ja, and until the Lord really shows me I must be somewhere else, this is where I will be. <sup>98/</sup>The purpose is not for a child to get an 'A' for a subject, the purpose is for the child to make right choices and to be a whole person.*

After finalising Claire's constituent profile, a total of 98 NUMS were highlighted and coded (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>1-98</sub>). Next follows the construction of the descriptive narrative to craft Claire's subjective lived-world experiences from her descriptions.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

The fact that a total of 98 NUMs were coded in the construction of Claire's constituent profile meant that several themes emerged. In order to address my main research question and subsidiary research questions, I merged some of the themes into the following five themes, namely: (i) her experiences as a beginner teacher, which almost consumed her lifeworld; (ii) her experiences as an Accounting teacher and support from the principal; (iii) the learners she teaches and her approach to the teaching of Accounting; (iv) her views about constant curricular change, such as OBE, NCS and the CAPS over the last two decades; and finally (v) her views about the training offered by the Education Department with the phasing in of the new curriculum.

According to Husserl (1975), a person's conscious awareness is their intentional directedness to objects, events and emotions. Therefore in the construction of Claire's descriptive narrative I had to 'bracket the self' and apply the principle of the phenomenological reduction to articulate her perceptive reality. These principles in the Husserlian philosophical tradition allowed me to reflect on her intentional directedness towards her experiences as a beginner teacher.

Claire started her teaching career and professional journey as a Grade 10 Accounting teacher in 1992 at an *Afrikaans-medium* school in *Pretoria*. As a beginner teacher she found herself ‘in the deep end’, with little support and mentoring. The same year she started to teach, her more experienced Accounting colleague, who taught Accounting to the Grade 11s and 12s, and also her only ‘helping hand’, left the profession. The emptiness left by the Accounting teacher left her stranded where she now, in her words, *had to find things on my own ... So I was very much on my own* (refer P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>1-4</sub>). She added, *I was the only Accounting teacher at the school and had to take the Grades 11 and 12 the following year* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>5-7</sub>). She also explains that she learned mostly on the run and through experience and had to ask for help *in subject meetings when she was lost*. With no one to assist or to lend a helping hand, her lived space at the time seems to have had its own modality of spatial meaning with its own complexity and intimidating web of survival. The implicit expectations related to expected behaviour was difficult to escape, as she had to find ways to take control of the situation. She states *the syllabus was very much self-explanatory... and she followed the syllabus as a guide to teach the content* (refer P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>5-9</sub>). She propounds that *during that period of her career her greatest challenge and fear was the setting of examination question papers*. The comment labelled P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>10-11</sub>) exemplifies her cry for help.

Essentially, she had to adapt to the professional expectations of the profession and had to push herself to cooperate. *I had to encourage myself*, she said (smilingly). Bandura (1977) found that a person’s efficacy and drive to succeed are major determinants in boosting his or her efforts and persistence. In other words, people with a high level of self-efficacy see challenges as a motivation and work attentively to master them. The following excerpt illustrates Claire’s high level of self-efficacy and drive to excel: *I don’t need somebody to tell me, what I must and can do. If I really wanted to, obviously I can ask. But I learned to do research, I can see what there is, that I want to do more ...* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>13-16</sub>). Du Plessis (2009) lists two approaches to tackling a learning problem, that is, a destination-based or a journey-based approach. Claire’s response to the situation seems to lie more in the journey-based approach. A journey-based approach, Du Plessis

(2009) explains, makes the learning objective a necessary part of experience. The experience is never seen by the individual as a destination or central objective to be reached but rather as a journey. Such a journey elicits appropriate behaviour. The journey-based approach also offers new ways of thinking of how to approach any challenge.

As a beginner teacher her teaching approach was very situated in the traditional method characterised by teacher-centredness and ‘teacher talk’, and was textbook-driven. In her view, this approach was successful and effective because *they* (her Accounting learners) *were able to listen, to comprehend and to do ...* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>17-22</sub>). She contends that during that time the learners were more disciplined and did not need illustrations that require teachers to use technology to make the content visually explicit. Claire taught at this school for seven years, after which she sadly had to bid them farewell because of her family situation. She mentioned that her husband had to leave the province, which forced her to resign and to look for another job (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>23</sub>). Drawing from Husserl’s ‘lifeworld theory’, one can say that Claire’s experiences at this school had its own challenges and norms, which implicitly defined her and almost consumed her lifeworld. This brings me to her experiences of teaching in two other schools in the Western Cape province.

After leaving Pretoria, Claire quickly got a teaching post at a Technical High School in Bellville, where she was responsible for Computer Studies and Accounting (Grades 8 and 9). She also pointed out that because it was a technical school, every learner had to do Mathematics; therefore she also had to help out with the teaching of Mathematics. She stayed at this school for two years and left because the school did not offer Accounting in Grades 10 to 12 (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>25-27</sub>). She said *I stayed at this school for two years (1999 and 2000), because I wanted to teach Accounting. That was sort of my favourite subject, and they didn’t offer it at that stage* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>29-30</sub>). She left this school and took up a position as an Accounting teacher at the school where she is currently teaching (School C). At the time of the interview Claire had been teaching at School C for 16 years and had 25 years of teaching experience in total. Currently she is the Head of the EMS (Commerce) Department and (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>34</sub>).

At School C they split EMS offered in the GET Band into its respective specialised discipline domains, namely, (i) Accounting; and (ii) Business Economics and Economics. This means they have designated teachers that only teach Business Studies and Economics, or Accounting. In other words, the EMS teacher (if not qualified to teach Accounting) does not necessarily teach all three integrated disciplines. For Accounting they have a total of four teachers, including herself, who only teach GET Accounting. She points out that this *expert-subject approach* allows them to prepare learners adequately for the FET Band. Concerning expertise, she points out that they have no problems in this regards; however, the problems they do experience are external to the school and stem from the DBE. From this perspective she avers (with a stern and frustrated look on her face) that instead of evenly spreading the Accounting syllabus across the Grades 8 and 9 syllabi, it is not evenly spread in these grades. She states that the Grade 9 syllabus is much more densely packed, while in Grade 8 they cover only one broad topic. She offers her solution to the problem by stating that the syllabus for Grade 8 must cover some of the Grade 9 content. The statements labelled P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>40-49</sub> corroborate this point.

Unfortunately, not much is written about this aspect relating to the uneven spreading of the syllabus for Accounting in Grades 8 and 9, or about the fact that the narrowness that the content covered in the GET Band seems to affect the learners in the FET Band. A study by Schroeder (2009) rather addresses the poor and inadequate content knowledge offered by teachers in the GET Band and the consequences this has for Accounting in the FET Band. Also drawing from my own experiences as an ex-Accounting teacher, I share similar sentiments that the unequal conceptual progression and coherence across grades do pose serious challenges for Accounting learners.

The school is well resourced and each Accounting classroom is fitted with a computer and/or laptop, data projector and/or a television as teaching tools. The teachers also receive valuable support from the principal. In my opinion, the school can be viewed as a protected space in which she feels supported. Research over the years has shown that when teachers are supported by management, they

feel a sense of implicit belonging. Such feelings often elicit more commitment from teachers when they perform their duties. The following quote substantiates this statement: *We have a very supportive principal, so we have no problems* (for full details see, P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>92-96</sub>).

Claire avers that most of the learners who come from primary school to high school do not read, or cannot read. Those who can read do not know how to read with comprehension (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>71-72</sub>). Claire also raised serious concerns about the disciplinary problems at the school. By discipline she refers to the learners' commitment to their work. She laments *the basics of the discipline are not there anymore. These problems come from home, it is not a school problem ... Some kids grow up without a dad or a mom, the number of divorces, ja, so it is very difficult for us* (refer P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>73-78</sub>). In her lifeworld, as the daughter of a Deputy-Principal and an Accounting teacher who taught her to take responsibility for her own learning, she sees her learners not applying or adhering to the same principles. She empathises with the situation by motivating them, because the social conditions at home and lack of effective parenting are the main reasons for children becoming de-motivated. This claim is corroborated by citations (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>79-81</sub>).

On the other hand, she feels the learners do not see the natural consequences of their actions, because they progress to the next grade despite not paying attention to their school work. Linking Husserl's (1970) lifeworld to Claire's intentional consciousness regarding her learners, she appears to be caught between two completely different worlds: one that reflects her own personal experiences – that gives her a specific outlook on life – and the one of the children she teaches. She attempts to impose her subjective world as a child, where she had to take responsibility for her own learning, on the objective lifeworld of her learners, whom she conceives as 'beings in suffering' because of their social conditions, but at the same time she also wants them to learn the hard way by making the consequences of poor discipline more explicit.

Claire tends to follow more of a teacher-centred approach of teaching towards writing the test. When asked how she teaches the subject to her learners, she

pointed out that most of the time she uses the blackboard. She encourages her learners to memorise concepts and formulas through repetition by exposing them to exercises with a strong focus on past examination question papers. Citations P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>67-70</sub> verify this statement.

Although she states that she is continuously in search of new ways to teach the content because of continuous curricular changes (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>72</sub>), it appears as if she is stuck in the traditional paradigm of teaching. What is surprising is the fact that even though School C is so well resourced, but she could not give details on how to integrate technology into her classroom practices.

Overall Claire comes across as very positive and flexible in her attitude and mindset towards curriculum change over the years. She states *change is not easy*, but it is needed if the change *benefits the child* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>56-60</sub>). She also pointed out that it is not only teachers who are/were affected by these changes, but also the children. From this perspective she states: *how this affects the child is the more difficult part*. Commenting on the shift from apartheid education to the introduction of the new outcomes-based curriculum (OBE), she expresses her disappointment in the fact that curriculum policy makers removed most of the Accounting syllabus from the EMS. She lamented *if you think about Grade 8, you only do Service Enterprise, then in Grade 9 you must do Trading Enterprise, Cash Sales, Credit Sales, Credit Purchases and Cash Purchases. That is a lot of work for the Grade 9s to cover...* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>43-45</sub>).

She also expressed concern about the changes in Accounting that took place in the shift to the NCS and its effect on the learners (for full details of this claim refer P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>61-66</sub>).

She pointed out that the NCS affected her whole approach to the teaching and learning of Accounting, because she had to adapt her teaching style by focusing mainly on repetition and memory learning, and by guiding the learners with exemplar question papers and memoranda. This seems to suggest that her focus was not so much on whether the learners understood the work, but on whether they were adequately prepared for the examinations. Seeing that most of the

changes in the Accounting curriculum took place in the shift from OBE to the NCS, she is much more positive about the CAPS, because the structure of the curriculum remained more or less the same. Claire contends that the lessons learned from the shift to the NCS prepared her well for the changes in the CAPS, seeing that the curriculum did not come with widespread changes. The following excerpt substantiates this claim: *See, with the CAPS in Accounting, there wasn't that much change from the previous syllabus (NCS) to CAPS....* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>61</sub>). According to Honan (2004), teachers change rhizomatically with widespread curriculum reform. She found that some adapt, as in Claire's case, others change their approach, while others continue as if nothing has changed. In each teacher's world 'curriculum change' has a unique meaning, especially in South Africa where the findings of some studies have shown that the legacy of apartheid has had a major effect on teachers' classroom practices, because they seem to be trapped in their old teaching styles and approaches, and in most cases the status quo remains in place. Taking into account the totality of Claire's strong views and experiences in working with the curricula, all components clearly show that there is a direct link between her intangible temporality and her socio-historical understanding of curriculum. She sees curriculum change in the traditional way – as a syllabus in which the content is shifted around, added or taken away, which is a 'knowing curriculum', and she misses the modern conception of the curriculum as an 'understanding curriculum' in which the focus is on the philosophical aspects of practice, and understanding the learners and their connectedness to the curriculum (for full details see Pinar, 2015a). On the basis of this description and her views on the curriculum, her lifeworld seems to be static, motionless and structured in a particular way that reflects old views which she finds difficult to escape from.

Relating to her views about the training they received from the DBE in preparation for the shift from the NCS to the CAPS, she was very positive and optimistic. See describes the training as *very valuable* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>82-88</sub>). She also commends the DBE for their continuous support. She states *the material that they made available from the department's side, they really provided us with so much information*. She pays the curriculum advisors the highest compliment when she

says *the amount of work that they put into schools is amazing*. Furthermore, she points out that when teachers struggle to grasp certain topics or sections in the syllabus, the CAs are eager to arrange workshops to offer training and to provide them with extra materials and notes to get a better understanding of the work. This claim is corroborated in citations (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>89-91</sub>).

This support provided by the DBE district offices and the school principal seems to create a positive atmosphere for the teaching and learning of Accounting. Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory' is based on two doctrines, namely, one that is explicit and one that is implicit. While the former (the explicit) addresses the world common to all, the latter (the implicit) addresses the world of personal experiences. Drawing from the implicit lifeworld, Claire expresses a very positive attitude towards the way Accounting is structured and delivered to the learners at the school, and always places the learner at the centre of the subject. Secondly, her attitude as revealed in her story allows her to maintain a more positive connectedness to the context in which she teaches. In other words, there seems to be a form of 'implicit negotiation' between how the changes in the curriculum and its impact on the learner shapes her thinking. This is what I will discuss next, when I present the interpretive narrative.

Although there are times that she gets frustrated, Claire still feels that she is in the right profession. For her, the importance of developing the child as a whole outweighs the importance of the child performing well academically (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>98</sub>).

#### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

By applying Husserl's 'lifeworld theory' in the construction of Claire's descriptive narrative (above), my focus was on her thinking as an inner process carried out by an internal ego that has the capacity to hold images of experience and ideas in her mind. In constructing the interpretive narrative, I will now use Claire's mental content and contextualise it within the ontological representations of the environment in which she teaches. Thus conceived, the focus shifts to understanding Claire's world (the school in which she teaches) and how she copes in her lived space.



When Claire started out as a novice teacher in Pretoria in an Afrikaans-medium school during a racially divided era, ‘educational equity’ and ‘equal education’ did not exist in South Africa as a matter of government policy. Although both ‘educational equity’ and ‘equal education’ fall under the umbrella term educational equality, ‘equity’ is not synonymous with equal opportunities (Collins and Yates, 2011). To Collins and Yates ‘equity’ means that all children who come from different social groups achieve a similar profile of success with more or less the same percentage for performing well or poorly at school. As a coloured South African, who completed my school career under the apartheid education system, I am aware of the conditions of these schools. Schools in the city or in historically White neighbourhoods had exceptionally sound infrastructure, sufficient resources, appropriately qualified teachers and premium sporting facilities. It is in these conditions that Claire started out her teaching career. Furthermore, coming from an Afrikaner background, and teaching in an Afrikaans-medium school, she could relate well with the socio-cultural background of the learners. Moreover, her background as child with a father who was a Deputy-Principal and Accounting teacher, the school and university she attended, as well as one year of voluntary military training all equipped her well with the necessary skills required in order to survive in the teaching profession and to become an effective teacher. As a novice Grade 10 Accounting teacher, she displayed a positive attitude towards teaching and her learners (whom she described as ‘disciplined’), and showed an independent work ethic. Claire’s positive attitude towards teaching, her positive attitude towards her learners, and her independent work ethic are essential qualities needed to flourish in the teaching profession. These descriptions are in stark contrast to those of many novice teachers, who often describe their first year of teaching as being accompanied by feelings of aloneness, isolation or social ostracism in the school. Claire had the following views about her first year as a teacher:

*I don’t need somebody to tell me, what I must and can do. If I really wanted to, obviously I can ask. But I learned to do research, I can see what there is, that I want to do more (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>14-16</sub>).*

This positive and independent attitude that she displays did not simply emerge when she entered the profession, but was instilled and locked in her consciousness as a child when her father told her to *work hard*. These qualities were further reinforced in high school and university training when they (the university students) were trained to take responsibility for their own learning through learning styles in which they were given activities to complete and discuss in class. She explained: *the way it [Accounting] was taught, was very simple. This is the information, this is the exercise you do it, we mark it, it's as simple as that* (for full details refer, P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>19-24</sub>).

Thus positivity, independence and an attitude of being open to learning new things are not skills that are biologically inherited, but personal skills that she had learned as a child and student. I would not go as far as to say that the way she was trained as a child and university student was a profound education, but she was endowed with useful knowledge and skills necessary to approach the learning environment. Drawing on Heidegger's (1927/1967) *Dasein*, one can say her description of self can be viewed as a 'relational state of being', because it resonates with her 'character'. The tenacity she displays to understand things and perform well stems from being confronted with similar challenges as a child. Perhaps she saw how her father responds to such challenges. Aristotle argued that human beings should be understood in terms of their form and structure intellectually (Heidegger, 2002). Bakhurst (2011) puts it differently, and states that 'baby humans' are 'mere animals' who are transformed through education. This constitutes the second nature of our existence and therefore I view Claire's 'relational state of being' as a 'semi-permanent state' given the fact that her 'capacity to reason' according to *Dasein* has been shaped and influenced by a flow of events in the way she was raised and educated. This 'relational view of being' brings me to her learners, whom she describes as de-motivated because they do not take their work seriously.

According to the DBE (2011) one of the main objectives of the CAPS, and all its predecessor curricula, is to produce independent, critical, open-minded, and life-long learners, but this objective does not materialise at the classroom interface.

To be an active implementer of OBE, the NCS or the CAPS, her perspective on the learners and her teaching approaches should reflect the development of skills such as nurturing her learners in order to encourage them to inquire and discover knowledge on their own. On the other hand, the government's drive and focus on good results in tests and high pass averages compels teachers like Claire to overlook and disregard these qualities. This means what is needed is to gain fresh insights into understanding how and why curriculum change policies invoke and provoke particular teacher practices.

Claire echoed her concerns about the fact that she was taught and trained to be independent and disciplined as a child and to do things on her own. This discipline that she had to apply as a learner and student seems to evade the modern-day learners whom she teaches. In her view, her learners have an 'I don't care' attitude towards their work. *They simply don't care*, she states, because the YIP (year in phase) policy allows children to progress from one grade to the next without attaining the minimum pass requirement stipulated for that grade by the Education Department (DBE, 2012). According to this policy, this progression is determined by a learner's age rather than their academic performance (Brophy, 2006). The YIP policy was promulgated in 1998, when the DBE (previously referred to as the DoE), legislated a progression law that limited grade repetition to one additional year in a phase (YIP). This law allows social promotion until Grade 9 and again from Grades 10 to 12. According to Stott, Dreyer and Venter (2015), this law seems to be abused as schools implement *en masse* in the FET phase in response to a circular issued by the Minister of Basic Education. Claire views this law as a major concern as it de-motivates children from taking their school work seriously, leaving her powerless, as she now has to fulfil the role of encouraging and inspiring her learners instead of them working on their own - being internally motivated to do their work and to do it well. This seems to suggest that 'being', as projected here, should be viewed in Cavell's (1976) 'onion layer' metaphor in which the projection of the self is displayed amidst personal beliefs, hard work, discipline and responsibility. This way of being performs 'intelligently' because sub-consciously Claire is more concerned with 'how do I survive' in the context of the situation within which she feels powerless.

Consequently, given the fact that the learners do not show any interest towards the learning of Accounting juxtaposed with her ‘survival mentality’, Claire seems to adopt a counter-intuitive approach to teaching. She pointed out that the focus of her teaching is to encourage *learning by repetition* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>67-70</sub>), by giving her learners many exercises and question papers with memoranda to memorise complex concepts, calculations and their applications. This traditional approach to teaching – despite the school’s wonderful resources – seems to reflect historically on how she was taught Accounting. She stated that most of the time her Accounting teacher taught them through exercises and activities that they had to work out on their own at home. This implies that although she was well informed about computers and technology, she is trapped in a past which shapes her present. Heidegger (1927/1967) argues that when we undergo an experience in which we are subjected to something new, it is as if something befalls us, overwhelms us and in the process might transform us. In Heidegger’s (1927/1967) view, for someone to undergo change the person must ‘submit’ to the situation. This is clearly not the case for Claire as she continues to be dominated by her experiences of learning as a child and university student. According to Pajares (1992), a teacher’s belief about teaching can be described as his or her implicit theories, explicit theories, internal mental processes, rules of practice and action strategies. These beliefs dominate teachers’ commitment to how they think learners learn, which Harwood, Hansen and Lotter (2006) describe as a teacher’s ‘epistemological commitments’.

Concerning the constant curriculum change experienced over the last two decades, Claire states that she is very positive about it *as long as the learners benefit from these changes*. She also states that *change is good*, but it appears as if she did not really undergo a process of inner change because she is still trapped in traditional pedagogies and views learning mainly in terms of ‘memorisation’ as a cognitive exercise. This is predicated on her view that the focus of Accounting should be on conceptual and theoretical knowledge as opposed to the wider knowledge domain. Instead of expanding her horizon about the learners, their world and outlook on life as a full epistemological being, she sees them as objects with little knowledge of Accounting. This is a fair assumption to make with regards to her

views about curriculum change because, according to Heidegger (1927/1967), there is a direct link between ‘being’ and ‘being conscious in the situation’. In other words, there is a connection between how we think, the content of our thoughts, and the way our thoughts unfold into our behaviour in reality.

Throughout the interview around the issues concerning her view about the various curriculum changes experienced, she shifted the conversation to the content. Her whole emphasis about the shift from OBE to the NCS and subsequently to the CAPS is on the content for Accounting and the way that the content should be repackaged in the respective grades. For example, she pointed out that her biggest challenge was the shift from OBE to the NCS, simply because the topics included in the new curriculum were too difficult for the learners in what she calls ‘*a Higher Grade*’ curriculum. She pointed out that this curriculum (NCS) forced her to change her approach to teaching the learners. This approach she described promotes rote learning in which she teaches towards the test by following old examination question papers and memoranda. She could not make explicit the philosophical underpinning of the curriculum, such as its constructivist approach to teaching in which learners should be viewed as co-inquirers who, through discovery learning, explore the Accounting content. She did not enter into a discussion on the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This can mean either she does not understand the curriculum and its requirements, or she misinterprets the curriculum and what it means to her (see P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>83-88</sub>). When asked to raise any concerns, fears and challenges in her experience of the new CAPS, she stated that this curriculum did not change much. Again she raised the issue of content that was shifted around. Ball (1994) explains the teachers’ various (mis)understandings of policy as follows:

Generally, we have failed to research, analyse and conceptualize this underlife, the ‘secondary adjustments’ which relate teachers to policy and to the state in different ways. We tend to begin by assuming the adjustment of teachers and context to policy but not of policy to context. There is a privileging of the policymaker’s reality (p. 19).

In other words, the teachers' reading and mis-reading of policy texts seem to disregard the multi-dimensional nature of what such texts mean. According to Grosz (1995), there is not only one way to understand text and rhizomes provide an appropriate metaphor to understand how teachers engage with policy texts. She argues that there is not one pathway for a rhizome and states that likewise, when teachers engage with policy text, they have implausibly diverse and contradictory understandings. Claire's understanding of the various curricula texts that took effect between 1999 and 2011 was related only to lighter or heavier touches on the content and had nothing to do with classroom practices of teachers, the changed role of the learners, and the theoretical underpinning informed by the seven principles of the CAPS and all other curricula.

With regards to the training they received from the department and the support from curriculum advisors, she expressed a lot of positive views. For example, she pointed out that the training received by the department was *amazing*, the support from curriculum advisors was commendable as they bent over backwards in order to assist teachers who struggle with the content. They even provide workshops and notes to assist the teachers (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>86-91</sub>).

Claire still feels that she is in the right profession. Based on her statement *the purpose is not for a child to get an 'A' for a subject, the purpose is for the child to make right choices and to be a whole person*, it can be inferred that Claire is more concerned about developing the child as a whole, and that performing well academically is of secondary importance (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>98</sub>).

#### d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) pointed out that it is through bodily actions and movements that the embodied person inhabits space. What we observed from Claire's experiences as a beginner teacher is how her functional space became a problematic lived space in which her attitude of being a life-long learner helped her to overcome her challenges. Drawing from Claire's words, the essence of her development as a child, learner and university student, assisted her *to find things on my own* (refer P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>1-4</sub>). When confronted with a problematic space as a

beginner teacher she stated *I don't need somebody to tell me, what I must and can do. If I really wanted to, obviously I can ask. But I learned to do research, I can see what there is, that I want to do more* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>13-16</sub>). These statements imply that her training became situated in her consciousness, embodied and distributed when necessary. In Merleau-Ponty's terms, Claire's body 'knows how to respond and act' as a rhythm of behaviour, because learning something is for him not a purely cognitive process but a union of the soul and spirit in which the body and mind, which he views as flesh, are inextricably linked. He argues that a person's actions or behaviour is not a cognitive process, nor is it an automatic reflex, but should be viewed as the whole body acting as mediator. Thus the way Claire was trained to be self-sufficient and to solve problems independently prepared her body as mode to respond to the intimidating web of the situation. She articulates her response in terms very close to the way in which Merleau-Ponty's understood the body, when she says, *I had to encourage myself... and I don't need somebody to tell me... I learned to do research, I can see what there is*. It seems as if she unknowingly stated that 'my body knows how to react – all I needed to do was to draw it out and allow my body to be'.

Within the framework of Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory', the same can be said about how she views her learners and how she teaches the subject. She knows the challenges they are faced with, which she describes as *discipline is no longer there*, but then she also provided an explanation for this situation when she stated three times that *it's a home problem*. She added that she also knows how to respond to the challenge which is to *motivate them...* In other words, her body is what Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) describes as an analogical system of practical intelligence which represents a system of understanding that leads to a particular way of reasoning, drawn from her perceptual experiences. Because she knows, implies that she has paid (what Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 30, calls) 'primary attention' to the situation. Primary attention is different from secondary attention (or ordinary attention). This means there are two aspects that require careful attention. The one aspect is the content that she needs to cover with the learners combined with her other academic and administrative duties, while the other aspect is the world of the learner as an embodied being outside of school shaped



by personal, social and cultural factors. She stated *they come from divorced families* and have other responsibilities like *looking after a small brother or child at home*, which means the child's challenges take precedence and hence she addresses these challenges by encouraging them and adjusting her teaching style. She pointed out that *I have to give them exercises and guide them to pass examinations by letting them study past examination exemplars and memoranda*. This is not a computational response, but a systematically solicited neural network of motor neurons that connects every aspect of the body, including her emotional channels and all other parts of the body.

Although she is highly positive about curriculum change, when she says *change is good*, she struggles to make a practical paradigm shift from the traditional apartheid curriculum to the post-apartheid curricula (OBE, NCS, CAPS, and so forth). Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), the fact that she does not get as far as to make the shift is because the historical (old curriculum) is loaded with personal and symbolic meaning, because it represents a system in which she was taught and trained. This system worked for her and therefore is always part of her perceptual field. Merleau-Ponty does not see our past experiences as being stored in our long- and short-term memory, as neuroscientists argue. To him the past is always part of the present when we are confronted with a similar event. When a familiar experience occurs, the perceptual field brings into action those 'memories that connect with past events', so to speak, as the first operation of attention. This means the body surveys the mind, the nervous system, the emotional intelligence and all other parts of the flesh to form a perception. The difficulty that she experiences when confronted with the implementation of the new curricula through Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'attention' (as explained earlier in this chapter) is that subconsciously she cannot connect the old with the new to bring into action a new perception in a new dispensation. Submerged in a new curriculum, Claire's action is driven by a historical perceptive consciousness and she finds herself in an on-going cognitive battle of interpretation in which she sees the new curriculum through the lenses of the old curricula. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) points out that no world exists apart from the world as lived-in. However, this world can change when the inhabited space that shapes the mind evolves. For



example, when a person gets burned by a fire, the fire that initially drew the person towards it is now viewed as something to be handled with care. So instead of being drawn to it, the person has learned to maintain a certain distance from it. So in Claire's case, until what is secondary becomes primary, her body with all her intelligence knows how to respond. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) argues that being projected in a particular setting triggers some automaticity, which is a way of acting that is provoked by habit, convoked by gestures and is a form of behaviour that hardly escapes our consciousness (p. 106).

## 5.8 Research participant: Deidre

### 5.8.1 Part one of the interview

#### a) Constructing the constituent profile

As I approached Deidre's school (School D), I noticed someone standing at the elaborate gate (see Figure 4.14). I presumed it was Deidre. She had come out to the gate to meet me. Immediately I thought that she was very considerate, since it was a long way between the gate and the administration building. She greeted me with a smile and a handshake, and we proceeded to one of the offices in the administration building to conduct the interview. As I was preparing my aids and material for the interview, we discovered that we have a few mutual acquaintances in the education field which put us both at ease. It did not feel as if we were complete strangers anymore and we could proceed with the interview in an affable manner. I started off by asking her to tell me about her childhood experiences, for example, the place in which she grew up, the area, the community and their culture. She replied:

*<sup>1</sup>I grew up in Brackenfell ... <sup>2</sup>a very close-knit community that is based around the school. <sup>3</sup>Parents supported their children and used to go to all school activities. <sup>4</sup>I was very happy whilst growing up.*

When she spoke about her family it was as if she was reliving happy moments:

*<sup>5</sup>We were three children of which I am the eldest. <sup>6</sup>My mother and father were happily married. <sup>7</sup>My dad was an internal auditor and my mom did*

*secretarial work after Grade 12. <sup>8/</sup>I had a very good relationship with my parents, especially with my mom ... later on I became close to my dad as well. <sup>9/</sup>We were always a very close-knit family.*

She emphasised the values her parents taught her in the following response:

*<sup>10/</sup>They were very dedicated. They never stayed off work. Loyalty was important to them. I think that is why I have been at [School D] for twenty-two years now. <sup>11/</sup>Also you must take pride in your work and be efficient in what you do so that people can look up to you ... and see a leader.*

She continued talking about her family by expounding on her parents' dreams for her and her siblings:

*For them it was non-negotiable – <sup>12/</sup>you had to get a tertiary education. <sup>13/</sup>My dad always used to say that it is very important for a woman to study so that you are not dependent on your husband, especially in the case of a divorce where you might be stuck with the children. <sup>14/</sup>He never forced us into any specific direction, but left it up to us to decide.*

Her response to my question on why she decided to become an Accounting teacher took me by surprise. She explained:

*<sup>15/</sup>I was still planning on becoming a primary school teacher in Grade 12 when we had a Careers Day at our school. <sup>16/</sup>The Technikon came to our school and informed us about a commercial course. <sup>17/</sup>I decided that I would do this commercial course and do a teacher's qualification afterwards or if that does not work out I would have the option of working in the private sector. That was actually my main reason for changing to this commerce course.*

Deidre mentioned that she <sup>18/</sup>enrolled at Cape Technikon for the commerce course in 1982 where she <sup>19/</sup>majored in Business Economics, Economics and Typing and took Accounting up to 2<sup>nd</sup> year level; and then <sup>20/</sup>went to Stellenbosch University for one year to do a Teacher's Diploma.

She expounded on how she coped with the commerce course without an FET Accounting background:

<sup>21/</sup>*My first year was a bit of a struggle.* <sup>22/</sup>*Fortunately my dad helped me ... a lot.* <sup>23/</sup>*I also took extra lessons with an Accounting teacher.*

To my question on the adequacy of the content covered at Cape Technikon in preparation for her to teach FET Accounting, she replied proudly:

<sup>24/</sup>*It was more than adequate – yes, definitely, it was adequate for the Accounting syllabus in schools those years. It was 100% suited for that.*  
<sup>25/</sup>*But the content lacked interpretation knowledge needed to teach Accounting today.*

On the aspect of whether or not the lecturers related the content to real life, she had to think hard (perhaps because it was so long ago) but eventually responded:

<sup>26/</sup>*Yes, they did.* <sup>27/</sup>*They also took us on outings to companies.*

When asked about the teaching strategies employed by the education lecturers at Stellenbosch University, she answered excitedly:

<sup>28/</sup>*They were experts in their field – very good, encouraging and supportive.*  
<sup>29/</sup>*The method lecturers went through the school syllabus with us.* <sup>30/</sup>*They taught us the skill of teaching, how to set tests and exams, how to fill in the register, etc.* <sup>31/</sup>*We also had to do practical lessons [micro-teaching] at university.*

I coded 31 statements with key phrases from the data in the first part of the interview, which revealed various NUMs. These NUMs formed the basis for crafting the descriptive narrative of Deidre's early lived experiences (personal background and teacher qualifications), which is presented in the next section. Each statement was numbered and should be read as P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>31</sub> (P<sub>1</sub> refers to part one of the interview, while D<sub>1</sub> refers to Deidre's statement one and D<sub>31</sub> to Deidre's statement thirty-one).

#### b) Constructing the descriptive narrative

One of the main principles of a phenomenological inquiry is to describe phenomena as they present themselves or as they are given to us in experience. In the construction of the descriptive narrative the following main themes emerged:

(i) the community in which she was raised, (ii) the supportive role of her parents, and (iii) how she ended up in the teaching profession as an Accounting teacher. So, how does Deidre experience her world pre-reflectively, pre-verbally, in its lived immediacy?

Deidre, being a white Afrikaner, who was 52 at the time of the interview, grew up under apartheid in South Africa. The Group Areas Act of 1950 allowed the government to reserve the most developed areas in South Africa only for ‘white occupation’. The problem with this Act was that the biggest and best parts of the country were set aside for the minority white population, while those of colour (approximately 35 million people) were forced to the outskirts that were far removed from the city and much needed basic amenities. Kallaway (1988) reminds us that this was not just political tinkering, but a subtle move towards conservatism. Deidre pointed out that she *grew up in Brackenfell*. This area was one of the many that was reserved for whites. She described the people who lived in Brackenfell as a *very close-knit community*... She said her parents *supported their children and used to go to all school activities*. Given the socio-economic benefits that white people enjoyed back then, it is fair to assume that Deidre’s parents and those in the community had more time and money to support and invest in the development and wellbeing of their children. Henry (2013) avers that social class is a powerful organising structure in society. Moreover, with a broad smile, Deidre said: *I was very happy whilst growing up*. The broad smile that accompanied this statement was as if she was remembering those happy times as if it were yesterday (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>1-4</sub>).

She had the same smile when she spoke about her family as if reliving fond memories. She explained that she was the eldest of three children and that her mother and father *were happily married*. Her father was an internal auditor and her mother was a secretary. She grew up in a *very close-knit family*. She describes her relationship with her mother as *very good* and that her relationship with her father became close only later on (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>5-9</sub>). Her parents taught her to be dedicated and loyal. In addition her parents taught her the importance of taking *pride in [one’s] work and [to] be efficient in what [one does] so that people look*

*up to you and see a leader* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>10-11</sub>). Although it was a non-negotiable fact that her parents wanted each of their children to obtain a tertiary education, they were *never forced into any specific direction* – the decision of choosing a career was up to them (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>12-14</sub>).

Despite the fact that Deidre did not do Accounting as a school subject, she still decided to apply to do a commerce course at Cape Technikon and to do a teacher's qualification afterwards at Stellenbosch University (literally) on the spur of the moment. The passage labelled P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>15-17</sub> reveals her sudden decision to become a teacher.

Deidre enrolled for the commerce course at Cape Technikon in 1982. She *majored in Business Economics, Economics, and Typing*. She only *took Accounting up to 2<sup>nd</sup> year level*. When she completed her course in commerce she enrolled at *Stellenbosch University for one year to do a Teacher's Diploma* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>18-20</sub>).

Deidre did not do Accounting at high school, therefore her *first year* (at Cape Technikon) *was a bit of a struggle*. She was very fortunate that her father (an internal auditor – see P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>7</sub>) could help her with Accounting. She also *took extra lessons with an Accounting teacher* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>21-23</sub>) to assist her with understanding the discipline. According to Deidre, the content covered in the Accounting module in the commerce course at Cape Technikon was *more than adequate ... for the Accounting syllabus* (curriculum) *in schools those years*. However, she mentions that *the content lacked interpretation knowledge needed to teach Accounting today* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>24-25</sub>). She tilted her head as if she was thinking back when she confirmed that the teaching strategies of the Accounting lectures at Cape Technikon related the content to real life. She also added that they even took them on outings to visit various companies (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>26-27</sub>). At the time Deidre was studying at Cape Technikon, the institution was under the auspices of the apartheid government which believed that the essence of a Technikon was technological training and that technikons had to concern themselves with the application of knowledge in contrast to the essence of a university whose main concern was the generation of new knowledge. Hence, training at all technikons

was industry-driven and had to expose their students to the real (practical) world. Deidre described the lecturers at Stellenbosch University as *experts in their field ... very good, encouraging and supportive*. Because of the excitement in her voice, it is my opinion that she is proud of what she was taught at Stellenbosch University. The excerpt labelled P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>29-31</sub> echoes Deidre's excitement with regards to what the lecturers at Stellenbosch University taught them.

c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Adams (2010) argues that the architectural spaces that people design, construct and experience have the potential to subtly shape the way they think. Therefore Deidre's experiences must be looked at or understood as the outcome of a spatial dialect which points to the imbrication of physical space, representational space and lived space. The ontological lived space or spatial representation refers to the specifics of how people live and how their subjectivities adapt to or transcend their geographical space. Deidre attitude was critical on the question of how she experienced her geographical space during her childhood. She defined her community as 'close knit', a phrase she also uses when she describes her family life. I use the term 'critical' because it refers to 'a certain way of thinking, speaking and acting, a certain relationship to what exists, to what one knows, to what one does, a relationship to society, to culture and also a relationship to others' (Foucault, 2002, p. 191). This is also evident in her description of her relationship with her mother and father, which she says was *very good*. Her spatial provenance is summarised in the statement when she says I had a *very happy* upbringing (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>4</sub>). While divulging her experiences, her facial expressions and body language seemed to convey a longing for those beautiful moments.

Her parents instilled in her good values, namely, to be 'dedicated', 'to take pride in your work' to be 'efficient' and to demonstrate or model leadership qualities. Soudien (2007) refers to these qualities as the 'head work' that parents perform on their children. Head work refers to specified subjectivities that parents want their children to assimilate and display. Koopman (2017) explains how his personal 'self' by way of 'head work' goes into hiding when he writes "Rooted in the deep and inscrutable regions of my unconscious, my inner 'self' went into hiding most

of the time. As a child I had to mask my deepest emotions, and had to ‘prepare a happy face to meet the faces’ that I would meet as an engaging projection screen for the people around me and in the community” (pp. 51-52). He avers that parents do this ‘head work’ when they want to live their lives through their children.

The fact that Deidre never planned on becoming an Accounting teacher is substantiated by her statement that she did not choose Accounting as a school subject in the FET phase. She ended up in the profession by surprise during a career exhibition held at their school. She was introduced to a career in Accounting at this exhibition by the Cape Technikon. After completing the Accounting course at Cape Technikon she enrolled for a teaching qualification at Stellenbosch University. Her father who was an ‘internal auditor’ (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>7</sub>) by occupation and an ‘Accounting teacher’ (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>23</sub>) assisted her with the challenges she faced while studying Accounting at the Technikon. She said: *My first year was a bit of a struggle. Fortunately my dad helped me ... a lot. I also took extra lessons with an Accounting teacher* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>21-23</sub>).

She stated that her training in the commercial course at Cape Technikon was adequate to prepare her to teach the subject (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>24-25</sub>).

When she enrolled for the one-year teacher’s qualification at Stellenbosch, she commended the high quality of training with expert lecturers in the fields. She said that the training as a pre-service teacher provided her with the required ‘skill’ to teach the subject. In her view the support of her father, who is well experienced in the field of Accounting, juxtaposed with the core content she learned at the Technikon and the University as a pre-service teacher was more than adequate for her to become an effective Accounting teacher. All post-apartheid curricula require teachers to engage learners critically by shifting the discipline from a technical discipline to one of computation and skills, such as communication by means of computers that use different software programs and are continuously changing. For example, the new CAPS for Accounting requires teachers to assist learners to master a number of competencies in which learners must learn how to work with large amounts of data by accessing databases and

multimedia sources. Despite the fact that Deidre only did Accounting in her first and second years at the Technikon and only covered the school curriculum in her one-year teacher training course at University, the overall pass rate of the Grade 12 Accounting learners at School D in 2016 was 99.2% [see Chapter Four, section 4.3.4 (b)].

d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Deidre pointed out that she did not do Accounting at school. Her first engagement with Accounting happened by ‘default’ when she enrolled for a commerce course at Cape Technikon. She further mentioned that during her training as a pre-service teacher the focus was on how to ‘teach’, ‘set exam papers’ and how to fill in ‘a class register’. This implies that her learning of Accounting can be summarised as the acquisition of propositional knowledge, which Jing and Ejgil (2017) describe as knowledge that is “outer fixed or inner constructed” (p. 307). This means her knowledge of Accounting is externally constructed in the outer constructed world and ‘given’ to her to subsume. In addition, it means objective knowledge exists outside of her body and offered to her as a passive mechanism. Consequently, her ‘body’ has no engagement with the world of Accounting in order to make sense of its intentions and structures, because this ‘passive mechanism’ does not allow the consciousness to bring together ideas and embodied world. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), ‘embodied knowledge’ always speaks because it is lived through. Such knowledge can be translated as ‘felt space’ because of inner constructions of meaning that resulted from outer fixations. This is not the case of how Deidre learned Accounting, because she stated that she had to learn from her father and a tutor (apart from her formal education at the Technikon). In other words, her learning can be described as the conceptualisation of abstract concepts and theories. As a learner and pre-service teacher, Deidre holds an indeterminate understanding of the world of Accounting – a broad and deep concept. When she decided to enrol for the commerce course and subsequently enter the teaching profession, she embarked upon what Merleau-Ponty refers to as a ‘determinate seeking’, which is evident in her descriptions of how she learned the discipline.



Determinate seeking means she wanted to empty herself of ‘indeterminacy’ so that she can develop a determinate grip on understanding (during her commerce course) and teaching the subject (as a pre-service teacher).

According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), a person’s past experiences are often re-projected in the present. Therefore Deidre’s past experiences and her interpretation of a situation influences and shapes the way the world is presented in the present, which in turn influences her mode of managing the learning situation. Merleau-Ponty calls the significance of past experiences of being as the ‘intentional arc’, which he describes as follows:

... the life of consciousness-cognitive life, the life of desire, or perceptual life – is subtended by an ‘intentional arc’ which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, our ideological, and our moral situation (1945/1962, p. 136).

According to the above quotation, lived experience gives deep meaning to a person’s world, so much so that it can condition the body in such a way that the power of space can result in the person repeating certain experiential forms. This repetition of behaviour shaped by past events can be referred to as a way of coping. This is because the person’s perception provides the most varied and most clearly articulated way of being in which all aspects of the body receive responses based on instruction grounded in his or her perceptual experiences.

#### 5.8.2 Part two of the interview

##### a) Constructing the constituent profile

The first part of the interview with Deidre focused mainly on her childhood experiences, that is, where she grew up, the community, her family and why she became an Accounting teacher. Although she decided to become an Accounting teacher, this first section could not report on the teaching strategies employed in an Accounting class because she did not do Accounting at high school. The second part of the interview addressed her professional journey and therefore concentrated on how she experiences her professional context (lived space) and

her experiences of the Accounting curriculum (for example, challenges, concerns and active engagement).

I started the second part of the interview by asking Deidre to give a short history of her teaching career, that is, where and how she started out in her first post until she ended up at her current school (School D). She said:

*<sup>1/</sup>My first teaching post was a part-time post, from July to September, in Sutherland. I returned to Cape Town after the three months and taught at J.J. Du Preez for another 3 months, Maitland High School for 1 year, Ysterplaat High School for 1 year, and then [School D] where I am for twenty two years.*

She relayed how she experienced the first few years of teaching as follows:

*<sup>2/</sup>At Sutherland High School I had a Grade 12 class and a Grade 10 class.*

*<sup>3/</sup>The Grade 12 class was almost done with the syllabus. I could use old exam papers for revision. As for the Grade 10s I simply followed the sequence of the topics in the text book. It was a lovely post ... I even stayed on the school hostel. <sup>4/</sup>I did not have a mentor at Sutherland High but afterwards, at all the other schools, I had a subject head, who could help me and guide me - so that was wonderful. <sup>5/</sup>When I started teaching at Sutherland High I had to be very well-prepared – every single day. <sup>6/</sup>The Grade 12 Higher Grade adjustments were my worst nightmare – it was difficult.*

*<sup>7/</sup>When I started at [School D] I had Typing and Business Economics. <sup>8/</sup>I was the subject head for Business Economics. <sup>9/</sup>Typing was okay, but I did not (I still do not) enjoy teaching Business Economics. I don't like subjects that needs lots of explaining, where you have to tell stories, where you have to elaborate. For my punishment I still have <sup>10/</sup>one Business Economics class, but for the rest, they are all Accounting classes – from Grade 8 to Grade 12.*

*<sup>11/</sup>Although I didn't major in Accounting it was the one I liked the most of all – it is challenging, I like to analyse things, the preciseness about the subject, it is structured ... logical. Out of all the commerce subjects this is the one*

*that I wanted to teach. So I made sure I was able to teach it. That is why from the beginning I prepared well so that I knew what to do.*

On the aspect of furthering her qualifications, Deidre explained:

*<sup>12/</sup>No, in the beginning I was always very involved with the school – extramural activities and organising the school dances, etc. At one stage I taught evening classes twice a week, to students doing a secretarial course, at Tygerberg College. I also don't like failing, I don't like to start something and not complete it. I would have hated to start studying part-time, fail, and then it would have been a waste of money.*

When asked to describe how she experienced the teaching of Accounting under apartheid in the 1980s and early 1990s compared to post-apartheid, she sighed and said:

*<sup>13/</sup>The children's work ethic is terrible nowadays. We do half the amount of exercises that we used to do because they don't do their homework. <sup>14/</sup>In the past they used to work in special Accounting books, for example, the Cash Book. Nowadays they get these workbooks with prepared templates. They just have to fill in the information.*

She continued by offering a possible explanation for the absence of a work ethic amongst learners nowadays:

*<sup>15/</sup>I think it is the community – not a community of academics, but a community of people who own their own businesses. <sup>16/</sup>That is why the children think they don't need education to become rich.*

When I asked her whether the preparation of the Grade 9 learners affects her teaching in Grade 10, she raised her eyebrows, sighed, and said:

*<sup>17/</sup>There are 2 periods a week allocated to EMS. You know that EMS consists of Accounting, Business Economics, and Economics. In the past Accounting used to be a separate subject in Grades 8 and 9. We had one period every day allocated for Accounting. <sup>18/</sup>Now, we have 2 periods per week for all three combined into one subject. So, <sup>19/</sup>in our school we teach mostly Accounting in Grade 9. <sup>20/</sup>We cover the Business Economics and*

*Economics content by supplying the learners with PowerPoint slides and letting them complete worksheets and do assignments – which are marked.*

<sup>21/</sup>*Although all commerce teachers can teach Accounting, we still find that the time available to teach all the Accounting for Grade 9 is not sufficient – with the result, <sup>22/</sup>many learners do not choose to take Accounting further. <sup>23/</sup>Sometimes we have to repeat some of the Grade 9 content at the beginning of Grade 10 because there is not enough time for reinforcing knowledge in Grade 9.*

*So, <sup>24/</sup>eventually what is going to happen with Accounting – the numbers are definitely dropping. Accounting is a very valuable subject. It is one of the top careers in the world – and we are actually getting rid of it.*

She illustrated the teaching strategies that she employs as follows:

<sup>25/</sup>*When I start a new type of transaction, I use the whiteboard and do an example with the learners – they will be copying the entries from the board into their workbooks. I then give them an exercise to do for homework.*

<sup>26/</sup>*The next day, we will mark the homework exercise – I already have the answer prepared on PowerPoint slides – they simply have to check and mark. If there is anything that I still need to explain I will again use the whiteboard to do this. I then give them another one or two exercises to do on their own depending on how well they could master the first exercise. <sup>27/</sup>I normally give them a short class test at the end of a chapter.*

To my question on the support provided by the school management especially with regards to resources, she responded:

<sup>28/</sup>*We have a very affluent school environment. There is every single facility that you can think of. We've got everything that we need in a class. We've got projectors and whiteboards, the interactive smartboards for every single classroom. We have computers and overhead projectors for every classroom as well as enough stationery. At the moment we only have a computer in every classroom and a computer lab, but we are going to phase in a laptop programme – where each learner receives a laptop to use in class. <sup>29/</sup>The principal is supportive but it is actually the governing body that is very supportive when it comes to the provision of resources.*

When asked about the principal's support with regards to attending training provided by the WCED, she stated in a firm tone:

<sup>30/</sup>*If there is any form of training we have to go – it is not negotiable. We have to attend everything that there is to attend.*

On the aspect of training received from the WCED in preparation for teaching the CAPS, Deidre responded positively:

<sup>31/</sup>*For Accounting I found it worthwhile – really enlightening in a sense - valuable.* <sup>32/</sup>*As soon as I have to interact with other teachers, I get extra information. We help one another through the discussions and practical exercises that we do at these workshops.* <sup>33/</sup>*The training focused mainly on content. They focused on the changes made in the syllabus – there are small changes, for example, the Income Statement.*

When asked about her views on the apartheid NATED Report 550, the NCS, and the CAPS, she lamented:

<sup>34/</sup>*The old curriculum (NATED Report 550) worked well for me – to be quite honest.* <sup>35/</sup>*The children knew exactly where they stood. They were more focused. They had structure.* <sup>36/</sup>*They were tested on shorter sections of the work on a regular basis. These class tests used to contribute towards a year mark.* <sup>37/</sup>*I obviously test less now because I don't have so much time.*

She continued to emphasise the differences between the old and the new curricula. This time by concentrating on the subject (Accounting):

<sup>38/</sup>*In Accounting the principles stay the same – whether you call it a Cash Book or a Cash Receipts Journal and a Cash Payments Journal it is the same thing. I never actually take note of any of the new jargon that we use nowadays. Whether they change the syllabus, I still know the principles are the same and I still teach the same way.* <sup>39/</sup>*Much of the content stayed the same – they just reshuffled it.*

She continued by expressing her concerns about certain aspects of the curriculum as well as the learners' approach to answering these questions in the examination:

<sup>40/</sup>*I think the interpretation sections are difficult for those learners who are not so bright. I think they find it difficult to analyse aspects and then explain. For example, they have to explain some of the aspects on the Financial Statements.* <sup>41/</sup>*I also think the children don't want to spend time on (what they refer to as) the theory questions – Analysis and Interpretation. They prefer to concentrate on the practical sections because that is where the bulk of the marks are.*

Deidre described how she has been coping with the changes in the educational landscape over the past few years as follows:

<sup>42/</sup>*I still teach exactly the same – it is mostly the same content that you have to teach.* <sup>43/</sup>*I am secure where I am – as a teacher at [School D].* <sup>44/</sup>*We've got the principal and the governing body behind us. Whatever we need, we are going to make it work. We will cope with any new syllabus. If you come from a school with money, they can put anything out there - the school can change in a day.*

To the question on whether teaching is still the right profession for her, she replied passionately:

<sup>45/</sup>*Yes, definitely, I really do think it is. The older you become the more you enjoy it and you actually want to be there for the children. I will definitely never leave teaching.*

To the question on what she wants to teach her learners besides the content, she responded fervently:

<sup>46/</sup>*I want to teach them to be aware of things... dangers that go on in life – not to go through life with blinkers on – to prepare them for life in general.*

When asked what makes teaching rewarding for her, her face lit up as she replied:

<sup>47/</sup>*It is lovely to see children understand the work, when they interact with each other about the work, when they uplift your day by paying you a compliment ...You can feel like a wreck and they would say: oh ma'am you look so nice today. They are so sweet.*

In the construction of the constituent profile, I identified 47 NUMs, labelled as P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>47</sub>. The P<sub>2</sub> refers to the first part of the interview after which each code follows chronologically ranging from 1 to 47. These codes will now be used to craft the descriptive narrative below as well as the interpretive narrative and anticipatory interpretive narrative which follow further down.

b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

In the construction of the Husserlian descriptive narrative the themes that emerged in the constituent profile above will be used to extract the essences of Deidre's experiences, namely: (i) her experiences as a beginner teacher; (ii) the impact that her training as a pre-service Accounting lecturers had on influencing her perception of teaching; (iii) the challenges and concerns she experiences in teaching Accounting; (iv) her views about her principal and the district offices concerning support to effectively teach the content; and (v) her perceptions of the latest curriculum (CAPS) and all previous curricula during post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

During the first two and a half years of Deidre's professional journey as a beginner teacher she taught at four different schools before her appointment at her current school (School D). Her first teaching post was for three months in Sutherland – an experience she described as *a lovely post* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub>). With a sigh, as if she was reliving those moments, she adds *I had to be well prepared – every single day ... the Grade 12 Higher Grade adjustments were my worst nightmare – it was difficult* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>5-6</sub>). She had to find her own way through complex teaching situations and soon understood the realities of teaching. To avoid feeling embarrassed she made sure that she was *very well prepared* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>5</sub>). She pointed out that she did not have a mentor at Sutherland. Schleicher (2009) notes that in the absence of effective guidance and support, unrealistic expectations and challenging situations create even more pressure on beginner teachers. From Sutherland she moved to J.J. du Preez for another three months, and then to Maitland High for one year. After Maitland High she taught at Ysterplaat High for one year until she accepted a post at School D - a post she still held at the time of the interview. She has been teaching at School D for twenty-two years (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>1</sub>).

At all the other schools at which Deidre taught, unlike her first teaching experience at Sutherland, there was always a subject head who guided her. She started out teaching Typing and Business Economics at School D. At the time of the interview she was teaching Accounting from Grade 8 to Grade 12 as well as one Business Economics class (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>7-10</sub>). Although she did not major in Accounting, it is the one commerce subject she likes and wants to teach, therefore she made sure that she was well prepared (especially at the beginning of her career) so that she *knew what to do* and would be able to continue to teach it (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>11</sub>).

In the first part of the interview Deidre mentioned that she only did Accounting up to second-year level (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>19</sub>), which in her view was adequate for teaching Accounting up to school level (for full details see P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>24-25</sub>). Furthermore, she pointed out that after completing her commerce qualification, she enrolled for her one-year teacher's diploma at Stellenbosch University, where the focus was more on the school content (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>29</sub>). She said the university lecturers *went through the school syllabus* (curriculum) with them. In addition, the focus of the lecturers was more on *the skill of teaching, how to set tests and exams, how to fill in the register, etc.* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>28-30</sub>). Therefore, relating the challenges that she faced in teaching the Higher Grade content, which she described as 'difficult', to her preparedness to teach the content raises the question of whether or not she was adequately prepared to teach the content.

Deidre describes her approach to the teaching strategy she applies to teach Accounting as systematic. She is very conscientious, because she tests her learners more than the number of times stipulated by the WCED. The excerpts labelled P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>25-27</sub> corroborate these sentiments.

Deidre's main challenge with regards to teaching Accounting is that *the children's work ethic is terrible nowadays* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>13</sub>). Although she did not specifically mention the word 'lazy', I got the impression that she thinks the learners are lazy and simply not interested in their work. She explained that nowadays *we (teachers) do half the amount of exercises that we used to do because they (learners) don't do their homework* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>13</sub>). In addition, she mentioned that many



years ago learners had to work in special Accounting books, for example a Cash Book. They had to fill in all headings, but *nowadays they get the workbooks with prepared templates and they simply have to fill in the information* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>14</sub>). According to Deidre, most of their learners do not come from a community of academics, *but a community of people who own their own businesses* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>15</sub>). In her opinion this is the reason *why the children think they don't need education to become rich* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>16</sub>).

A major concern (or worry) for Deidre is that the number of learners who choose to do Accounting in Grade 10 is dropping (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>22</sub>). She considers a career in Accounting to be *one of the top careers in the world* and added that the education system is *actually getting rid of it* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>24</sub>). She explained that in the past there was no subject called EMS, therefore *Accounting used to be a separate subject in Grades 8 and 9* with one period allocated to it every day. Nowadays, there are two periods per week allocated to EMS, that is, the combination of Accounting, Business Economics, and Economics (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>17-18</sub>). She pointed out that their school pays more attention to the Accounting aspects of EMS in Grade 9 than to the Business Economics and Economics sections. *They cover the Business Economics and Economics content by supplying the learners with PowerPoint slides and letting them complete worksheets and do assignments ... which are marked* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>19-20</sub>). Despite the fact that all commerce teachers at School D are qualified to teach the Accounting aspects in Grade 9 EMS, they sometimes still do not have enough time to cover all the content, resulting in many learners not choosing Accounting in Grade 10 (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>21-22</sub>). Furthermore, Deidre said that they sometimes *have to repeat some of the Grade 9 content at the beginning of Grade 10 because there is not enough time for reinforcing knowledge in Grade 9* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>23</sub>).

The principal and to a greater extent the governing body are very supportive with regards to providing adequate teaching and learning materials and aids. The excerpts labelled P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>28-29</sub> validate this statement.

In addition, the principal supports the staff members attending the WCED training sessions (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>30</sub>). Deidre found these training sessions offered by the WCED

*worthwhile ... enlightening and valuable.* She appreciated the discussions and practical sessions at these workshops (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>31-32</sub>). She mentioned that the sessions she attended *focused mainly on content ... on the changes made in the syllabus (curriculum), for example, the Income Statement* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>33</sub>).

It is clear that Deidre prefers the NATED Report 550 curriculum. The statements labelled P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>34-37</sub> emphasise this point.

In Deidre's view the curriculum has not changed too much over the years. She cited the example of the NATED Report 550 including a Cash Book, which was replaced by the Cash Receipts and Cash Payments Journals. She stressed that because the Accounting principles remain the same, she did not change her method of teaching (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>38-39</sub>).

She considers the section on Analysis and Interpretation (for example, certain aspects pertaining to the Financial Statements) *difficult for learners who are not so bright*. She is of the opinion that the learners do not want to spend time on what they consider the theory questions – they prefer the practical sections because they can accumulate more marks here in a shorter space of time (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>40-41</sub>).

In the midst of all the changes in the educational landscape over the years, Deidre feels secure as a teacher at School D, because they (the teachers at this school) have the support of the principal and the governing body. She is sure that School D will cope with any new syllabus (curriculum), because they have the financial reserves to change at a moment's notice (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>43-44</sub>).

Deidre believes that the teaching profession is still the right profession for her (refer P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>45</sub>).

She mentioned that besides the content, she wants to teach her learners *to be aware of things ... to prepare them for life in general* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>46</sub>). She added that it is rewarding to *see children understand the work, when they interact with each other about the work* and when they brighten one's day with a compliment (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>47</sub>).

## (c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Deidre's narrative as a beginner teacher illustrates that she came to know her profession all on her own for the first three months. She had no mentor or subject head from whom she could draw insights (or ask for advice) so that she could find her feet. She described her experience of teaching at Sutherland as both *lovely* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub>) and at times *difficult* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>6</sub>). She describes teaching Accounting as a nightmare. She said: *I had to be very well-prepared – every single day. ... [the] adjustments [to Higher Grade] were my worst nightmare – it was difficult.* Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) aver that a beginner teacher's practice is positively shaped by practice architects. To these authors, practice architects assist new teachers with insights on how to deal with challenging [pre]conditions that may constrain their growth and development. Kemmis and Grootenboer's (2008) idea holds true in line with the fact that when Deidre moved to two other schools, she described it as *wonderful* experiences, because at all these schools she had a subject head *who could help me and guide me*. At the time of the interview Deidre was teaching at an ex-model C school with a quintile index rating of 5<sup>18</sup>. At this school (School D) she is teaching Business Studies and Accounting. She said:

*Although I didn't major in Accounting it was the one I liked the most of all – it is challenging, I like to analyse things, the preciseness about the subject, it is structured ... logical. Out of all the commerce subjects this is the one that I wanted to teach. So I made sure I was able to teach it. That is why from the beginning I prepared well so that I knew what to do (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>11</sub>).*

This statement gives meaning to the idea that we only come to know ourselves and the world in the totality of our experiences on a continuum of time. Finlay (2003) contends that through a process of reflexive hermeneutic reflection we learn to understand more about ourselves through others – in Deidre's case her profession defines her. Perhaps the fact that her father was an internal auditor, whom she pointed out had also helped her with understanding Accounting when

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<sup>18</sup> Quintile index rating 5: Meaning that Deidre's school is a very wealthy public school (for further details see Chapter Four, section 4.1).

she enrolled for her commerce course, could also subconsciously have sparked her love for the subject and her decision to become an Accounting teacher. She imaginatively saw herself as a ‘primary school teacher’ when she was in Grade 12. She said *‘I was still planning on becoming a primary school teacher in Grade 12. Perhaps, subconsciously she now professionally lives in a world that combines both her own childhood dream and her father’s profession. In Heidegger’s Dasein one of the key issues is often the extent to which an ‘inter-subjective merging’ of self with other is shaped by existence in the midst-of-the-world (1927/1967). In other words, where (or what) are the boundaries that separate being (our existence) from our being (as a natural person)? In Deidre’s case, I would argue that it is not by coincidence that she ended up in the profession as an Accounting teacher but by design, because she always wanted to be a teacher and the fact that her father was an auditor clarifies the mystery of why she ended up teaching Accounting.*

Deidre has very strong views about the type of learners she taught under apartheid and post-apartheid. She finds it difficult to navigate her way through disjunctural spaces. Post-apartheid spaces can be described as disjunctural; under apartheid teachers followed a more structured, rigid and dogmatic syllabus with complete disregard for linguistic and cultural diversity. In contemporary South Africa, the curriculum, although structured, gives teachers a little more freedom to be innovative where ‘less is more’. She said: *The children’s work ethic is terrible nowadays. We do half the amount of exercises that we used to do because they don’t do their homework...* This is understandable, because under apartheid (as well as years before apartheid was instituted) the learner’s mind was viewed as a blank slate on which teachers could write information. Learners were encouraged to memorise information and therefore they could cover much more content. Today, the focus is not so much on the information but on the development of knowledge over the years, which requires much more research on the side of the learners. Therefore, consciously, it appears as if she is still dwelling in the old paradigm in which the amount of content matters more than the quality of the content.

The above argument can be substantiated by her approach to teaching. She pointed out that when she started teaching Accounting in the 1980s *I could use old exam papers for revision. As for the Grade 10s I simply followed the sequence of the topics in the text book.* Today almost four decades later she said:

*I use the whiteboard and do an example with the learners – they will be copying the entries from the board into their workbooks. I then give them an exercise to do for homework. The next day, we will mark the homework exercise – I already have the answer prepared on PowerPoint slides – they simply have to check and mark. If there is anything that I still need to explain I will again use the whiteboard to do this. I then give them another one or two exercises to do on their own depending on how well they could master the first exercise. I normally give them a short class test at the end of a chapter (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>25-26</sub>).*

This implies that she is still stuck in her old ways and habits of teaching. By so doing, her old world (apartheid) is superimposed on the new world (post-apartheid) in which she is expected to be creative and innovative in her approach. Although the school has all the necessary resources, she continues to use traditional transmission-based teaching to deliver the content. This statement is corroborated by the following statement:

*We have a very affluent school environment. There is every single facility that you can think of. We've got everything that we need in a class. We've got projectors and whiteboards, the interactive smartboards for every single classroom. We have computers and overhead projectors for every classroom as well as enough stationery ... (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>28</sub>).*

Deidre sees others in herself. In this case, she sees her lecturers in herself. Therefore how she was taught is now reflected in her own practice. Deidre's teaching strategy endorses the subject-object problematic, in which a person's *a priori* experiences are sub-consciously and not deliberately enforced in the lived world of others.

Deidre is very positive about the role of the principal and the district offices in promoting a healthy teaching and learning environment. She described the role of

the principal as *very supportive* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>29</sub>) and the training provided by the district offices as *worthwhile, enlightening* and *valuable* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>31</sub>). According to Glickman (2002), the most important role of the principal is to provide teachers with effective leadership and supervision. A South African study conducted by Bantwini (2017) has revealed that effective leadership and management by principals determine the quality of teaching and learning. In the United States the work of Brock and Grady (1998) found that principals determine the expectations of teaching and learning. Bantwini (2015) recommends that instead of the traditional top-down command-and-control approach, district offices should work in collaboration with teachers so that they (teachers) do not feel alienated.

Regarding her views on whether or not she is a proponent of post-apartheid curricula, Deidre pointed out that she is more in favour of the traditional apartheid curriculum (NATED Report 550). She stated that the apartheid curriculum was more structured with clearly specified objectives. The comment labelled P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>35-37</sub> echoes this point.

Many studies in South Africa have shown that Deidre's views on curriculum change are not unique. For example, in 2009 the Minister of Education appointed a commission of inquiry into the views of teachers nationally about all the post-apartheid curricula. The findings showed that most teachers struggle to understand the complex jargon and terminology of the new curricula. This led to superficial implementation strategies with the result that many teachers fail to implement the curriculum effectively. The final outcome by the (then) newly appointed Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, was the design and development of a new curriculum, referred to as Education CAPS, which is a modification of the National Curriculum Statement. Deidre stated that she *never actually take[s] note of any of the new jargon that we use nowadays. Whether they change the syllabus, I still know the principles are the same and I still teach the same way. Much of the content stayed the same – they just reshuffled it* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>38-39</sub>). Her views are consistent with Le Grange's (2017) ideas that "all post-apartheid curricula are merely lighter or heavier touches of the so-called factory model of schooling inspired by Frank Taylor (p. 3-4). Furthermore, he argues that

“no real change has occurred since the shift to post-apartheid all we experienced in South Africa was change without a difference”. In other words, Le Grange infers that the claim that the post-apartheid curricula is more enlightened, open-minded, flexible, and learner-centred, is just not true or reflected practice. This is illustrated in Deidre’s statements, for example, *I still teach the same way* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>38</sub>).... *much of the content stayed the same – they just reshuffled it* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>39</sub>).

Deidre still enjoys being in the teaching profession. She feels that she *want[s] to be there for the children* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>45</sub>). Based on her statement, *to be aware of things ... to prepare them for life in general* it appears that she has a passion to not only prepare learners academically but also to prepare them for the dangers that go on in life (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>46</sub>).

(d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Given the fact that Deidre did not do Accounting at school, not much can be said about how her experiences as a learner triggered her perceptive mindset, with reference to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological conceptualisation of the lived body. Consequently, no link can be made with her embodied experiences as a learner and the role that her Accounting teacher played in her life with her later professional life as an Accounting teacher. Therefore, the focus of this anticipatory narrative will be mainly on her dissatisfaction and strong views about her learners and why she prefers the NATED Report 550 above all the post-apartheid curricula.

The fact that Deidre grew up under apartheid and received her schooling under the NATED Report 550 allows the expression of her intimate and pre-reflective consciousness about how she learned at school. As pointed out in her constituent profile, she said *that modern day learners’ work ethic is terrible... and we do half the amount of exercises that we use to do*. These phenomena, that is, her own schooling career and how she learned versus her strongly negative views about her learners (or modern-day learners) seem to suggest that she is unconscious of how time has changed and that life is very different from when she grew up. It is as if the past continues to ‘dwell in’ (or ‘in-dwell’) her body. This means the

conditions such as the rules, policies and procedures of government institutions (for example, schools) that are designed and built for us, subtly inhabit us (or in-dwell us). Sometimes the places and spaces around us can in-dwell or inhabit us in significant ways (for full details see Merleau-Ponty's 'intentional arc' discussed in section 5.6.1. d). In 1943 Winston Churchill, in statement to the house of commerce, once declared, 'we shape our building and, afterwards, our buildings shape us' (The Churchill Centre, 2005). Heidegger (1971b), in support of Churchill's statement, wrote 'we are the be-thinged' that is pre-reflexively inhabited, conditioned and creatively provoked by the things of our world. Thus, in Deidre's case, the apartheid curriculum, with all its hidden agendas and objectives, subtly shaped her perceptive mindset and she finds very difficult to escape. Such shaping of the mind, which informs our habit and behaviour, could range from minor features to profound conditioning.

The same can be said about how she teaches Accounting based on her views about how she learned in the commerce course and the didactically orientated approach to teaching of her lecturers at Stellenbosch. The full spectrum of their effects is evident and observed when she said *We cover the Business Economics and Economics content by supplying the learners with PowerPoint slides and letting them complete worksheets and do assignments...* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>25</sub>) and *I use the whiteboard... I already have the answer prepared on PowerPoint slides – they simply have to check and mark...* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>26</sub>). In other words, it is through her 'past' that she seems to reinterpret the present that subsequently influences how she acts and behaves in the classroom.

Her perspectives on the changing curriculum landscape of Accounting in South Africa can be explained in the same way. She said, *The old curriculum* (NATED Report 550) *worked well for me ... . The children knew exactly where they stood. ... They had structure.* She continues:

*I never actually take note of any of the new jargon that we use nowadays. Whether they change the syllabus, I still know the principles are the same and I still teach the same way.* <sup>39/</sup>*Much of the content stayed the same – they just reshuffled it* (see P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>38-39</sub>).



All of the above comments are well summarised when she said, *I still teach exactly the same*. Within the situated, relational and embodied context of lived space each word, phrase and statement represent a unique appeal to her behaviour and actions. Van Manen (1990) captures the layered invisible essence and meanings of actions when he states that ‘cool water invites us to drink, the sandy beach invites the child to play, an easy chair invites our tired body to sink in’ (p. 21). Although these objects like beaches, sand and chairs do not speak to us, their essence is captured in how we respond. But Deidre’s statements reveal the meaning of how her embodied experiences of being taught as a child and pre-service teacher under the old NATED Report 550 (which provided the ‘conditions of existence’) invites her to act with little or even no resistance, as she states, *I am secure where I am ... We’ve got the principal and the governing body behind us. We will cope with any new syllabus* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>42-44</sub>). The post-apartheid curricula, such as the NCS and the CAPS, regardless of the kind of knowledge and prescribed pedagogical approaches, the new curricula still appear to be an opaque obstacle for Deidre to pursue because she states that *I still teach the same way* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>38</sub>).

## **5.9 Research participant: Edward**

### **5.9.1 Part one of the interview**

#### **a) Constructing the constituent profile**

Whenever I drive through the area in which Edward’s school (School E) is situated, I always notice children, teenagers and even adults simply dawdling around – at times it seems aimless. I always feel a bit on edge driving through the area.

When I spoke with Edward on the telephone, he suggested that the interview be conducted during the June holidays. He explained that it would be more convenient for him, seeing that he had to be at school to supervise learners during the annual Winter School, but most importantly he would not have to rush off to a class or see to some or other problem during our interview. I agreed. I was impressed when I discovered that the school actually organises a Winter School for the first week of the June holidays. Some teachers at the school assist in co-

ordinating various sporting and cultural activities for children in the community. Secretly, I was pleased that I could conduct the interview during the June holidays, because the atmosphere at the school would be calmer since most of the activities take place in the huge community centre and some others at the school.

When I arrived at School E, I accidentally bumped into the principal as I stepped into the administration building. He welcomed me with a warm smile and a firm handshake and said: *I am so glad that someone is interested in our teachers.* He mentioned that Edward had informed him of the interview and wished me well. Immediately I felt welcome and at ease. The principal directed me to the adjacent office, where Edward was waiting. Similar to the principal, Edward also welcomed me with a warm smile and mentioned: *I am pleased to be part of this study.* After a few pleasantries and clarifying the structure of the interview, we commenced.

To my introductory question on where he grew up, his family, and the schools he attended, he replied briefly:

*<sup>1/</sup>I grew up in Mount Pleasant... a suburb in Hermanus. I was born and bred there. Moving back on the swivel chair, as if distancing himself from me, with his arms folded, he continued, <sup>2/</sup>I attended school at Swartberg High in Caledon. After Grade 12 I went back to Hermanus where I am still staying today. <sup>3/</sup>I have two younger sisters and an older brother. Both my parents have passed away.*

Edward did not have much to say about the community in which he grew up nor about the school he attended (refer P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>1-3</sub>), but based on his lengthy response concerning his late parents, it is quite obvious that he admired both of them, especially his father. His response follows below:

*<sup>4/</sup>My mother was a domestic servant for a number of years. Later she was at home ... a home executive ... and sometimes helped out at the school ... teaching. <sup>5/</sup>My dad was a carpenter. <sup>6/</sup>They were very strict with us ... we couldn't stay away from school easily because they wanted us to have a good future ... a good career ... they were really loving parents. <sup>7/</sup>My dad was more guiding because he didn't want me to end up working as a*

*carpenter or in any other trade. <sup>8/</sup>My mother just supported him ...my father was the one guiding and pushing us. [Edward reiterated] he just wanted us to have a good future.*

At this point I asked Edward what values he thinks his parents instilled in him. I noticed great respect and admiration in his voice as he replied:

*<sup>9/</sup>My father taught me a lot of lessons in life ... people must trust you ... you must respect other people to have their respect, and never take anything from someone else that doesn't belong to you. <sup>10/</sup>He believed that you should be a person other people could look up to and other people would want to be connected with. Be the person other people would want to be with or work with ... so, that is also how I see my life.*

To my question on whether he had any dreams for himself and how those dreams compared to the dream his parents had for him, he responded:

*<sup>11/</sup>When I was at high school I had this feeling that I would become a provincial traffic officer, [but] my father said that teaching is a sure career.*

When I asked Edward why his father was so adamant on him becoming a teacher and that he should not do a trade, he explained:

*<sup>12/</sup>If my father had the opportunity he would have liked to become a lawyer. You know, that was in the early 40s and 50s when he grew up, so he didn't have the opportunities that we had. <sup>13/</sup>We had to become something in life – have a good career.*

To my next question on how he eventually became an Accounting teacher, Edward responded with a smile but in a firm tone, as if the dream of being a traffic officer was a silly one:

*<sup>14/</sup>My dad persuaded me differently. He said that teaching is ... a life-time career. <sup>15/</sup>In the end, I realised that being a traffic officer isn't as lucrative as being a teacher, so it was an easy mind shift. <sup>16/</sup>I applied and when I was accepted I realised that there is no turning back. So, after Grade 12 I left for Bellville to do my training as a teacher. I went to the training college ...*

*and I had good reports there. I even served on the SRC (Student Representative Council) in my third year.*

He eagerly responded to the question on whether he did Accounting at high school:

<sup>17/</sup>*Yes, it was one of my favourite subjects ... from Grade 9 up to Grade 12.*

When I enquired how he experienced Accounting at high school, he elucidated briefly:

<sup>18/</sup>*In Standard 7 (now Grade 9) I had difficulty with Accounting because the teacher wasn't a trained Accounting teacher. I decided to carry on with it in Standard 8 (now Grade 10) because I enjoyed the subject.* <sup>19/</sup>*From Standard 8 to Standard 10 (Grades 10 to 12) we had a female teacher ... she was very good. She was a trained Accounting teacher ... we enjoyed being in her class.*

He continued to relate his experiences of Accounting at high school by comparing the teaching strategies employed by the male Accounting teacher he had in Grade 9 and the female Accounting teacher he had from Grades 10 to 12:

<sup>20/</sup>*He just worked from the text book ... explained things that was written in the text book and sometimes he used the answer book as well ... the Key for Educators. He was explaining it with the text book ... in fact, he was just trying to get to the end.* <sup>21/</sup>*My friends and I decided that we would work together in a group ... and so we learned from each other.*

*But from Standard 8 (now Grade 10) we had another teacher who was better equipped than the one in Standard 7 (now Grade 9).* <sup>22/</sup>*She used to explain the exercise and then asked us to do the same exercise on our own without referring to the solution. We would then report any difficulties we had with the exercise to her. She would then explain again. So, in the end we could do the exercise very easily with the help that she gave us and the way in which she explained it.*

I enquired whether the Accounting teacher he had from Grades 10 to 12 influenced his own practice. He said:

<sup>23/</sup>*I still use the same practice because it worked for me and I believe it will work for other learners as well.*

To my question concerning his studies at Bellville Training College, the reason for him choosing to study there, and his majors, he replied:

<sup>24/</sup>*I matriculated (completed Grade 12) in 1978 [and] went to Bellville Training College in 1979. <sup>25/</sup>Afrikaans was home language, so that is why I went to Bellville Training College. <sup>26/</sup>My major subjects were Afrikaans and Accounting.*

With regards to my questions about his teacher training experience at Bellville Training College, especially the teaching strategies employed by the Accounting lecturers, whether it related to real-life, and whether he could apply it to his own practice, he said:

*I enjoyed my time at the college ... it was a good experience. I met new friends, new people ... I really enjoyed it. <sup>27/</sup>It was very challenging because it differed from the school Accounting ... it was more business orientated Accounting. What we did at school was very elementary. It (the content) related to the real world ... the content was more advanced. <sup>28/</sup>The Subject Didactics trained us how to teach Accounting in schools.*

<sup>29/</sup>*I think the lecturers mostly used question-and-answer method ... and problem-solving where students were given a question (exercise) and then had to come with the solution. <sup>30/</sup>It was basically what students needed – especially when you went out to a school ... we used some of it and some of it we tried to adjust to our own needs.*

I coded 30 statements with key phrases from the data in part one of the interview which revealed various NUMs. These NUMs formed the basis of the descriptive narrative of Edward's lifeworld that I represent in the section below. Each statement was numbered and should be read as P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>30</sub> (P<sub>1</sub> refers to part one of the interview; while E<sub>1</sub> refers to Edward's statement one; and E<sub>30</sub> refers to Edward's statement thirty).

## b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

Fundamental to Edward's object of consciousness during his childhood and early adulthood, as captured in the constituent profile, are: (i) the influence of his parents, especially his father, on his becoming; (ii) the role of his school teacher on his perceptiveness about Accounting as a school subject; and (iii) the training he received as a pre-service Accounting teacher.

Edward *grew up in Mount Pleasant – a suburb in Hermanus* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>1</sub>). Mount Pleasant was established as a coloured settlement in 1930. Today, there are many coloureds, as well as some blacks, who reside in the town. The residents have various occupations, for example, teachers, building sub-contractors, general labourers, tradesmen, domestic workers, etc. The income of these residents varies to a huge extent as do the sizes and types of houses. Some residents live in their own (privately owned) modest 'brick houses', others live in 'sub-economic houses'<sup>19</sup> and others live in shacks<sup>20</sup>.

Edward was very brief in his description of the community in which he grew up, the schools which he attended, and his siblings. When I specifically enquired about the community in which he grew up, his behaviour (body language) seemed very guarded as if he purposefully did not want to speak much about it. It appeared as if he is ashamed of the community in which he grew up. The one aspect that stands out during his childhood years is the admiration and respect he shows for both his late parents (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>6</sub>). He particularly values the lessons his father taught him regarding 'trust', 'respect', 'not to steal', 'to be a role model for others' (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>9-10</sub>) as well as his 'advice on becoming a teacher' (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>11</sub>). His father swayed him from his childhood dream of becoming a traffic officer, *to become something in life in order to have a good career... a lifetime career* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>13-14</sub>). His father instilled in Edward the belief that being a teacher would lead to a better life – better than the life he grew up in. The persuasive powers of his father eventually made him apply for the teacher's training course at Bellville Training

<sup>19</sup> Sub-economic houses/council houses: *houses* provided by the government at low rents for people who have low incomes.

<sup>20</sup> Shack: see Chapter Four, section 4.3.6 (a) for an explanation.

College in 1979. where he majored in *Accounting and Afrikaans* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>26</sub>). Situated in Bellville South, in the Western Cape Province, Bellville Training College was a teacher training college for mainly Afrikaans mother-tongue coloured students. Similarly to all other teacher training colleges, Bellville Training College operated under the auspices of the apartheid state. This means that the lecturers were compelled to implement the ideology of Christian National Education together with its associated doctrine of Fundamental Pedagogics (see Chapter One, section 1.2). Teacher training colleges did not offer degrees, but certificates in teacher training.

When I enquired whether he did Accounting at high school, he almost jumped out of his skin with excitement, by replying: *Yes, it was one of my favourite subjects ... from Grade 9 up to Grade 12* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>17</sub>). He elaborated on the aspect of his experience of Accounting at high school by stating that at first he struggled with the subject because the teacher *wasn't a trained Accounting teacher* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>18</sub>). He continued that from Grades 10 to 12 he had a different teacher who *was very good because she was a trained Accounting teacher* and he enjoyed *being in her class* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>19</sub>). Unlike the Grade 9 Accounting teacher, who *explained things that was written in the text book and sometimes ... used the answer book* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>20</sub>), the FET Accounting teacher *used to explain the exercise and then asked [them] to do the same exercise on [their] own without referring to the solution*. After doing the exercise, they (students) would *report any difficulties* they experienced and *she would then explain again* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>22</sub>). Edward has been using this same teaching method in his practice, because *it worked for [him]* and he believes *it will work for other learners as well* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>23</sub>).

He described the Accounting content they did at Bellville Training College as *challenging, more business orientated ... related to the real world ... [and] the content was more advanced ... Subject Didactics trained us how to teach Accounting in schools* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>27-28</sub>). His lecturers at the college *made use of the question-and-answer method* as well as the *problem-solving method* in most instances. *It was basically what students needed especially when you went out to a school ... we used some of it and some of it we tried to adjust to our own needs*

(P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>29-30</sub>). Drawing from my own experiences as a university lecturer teaching pre-service Accounting teachers, I can attest to the advantages of the question-and-answer and problem-solving methods. It is imperative that a learner discovers or constructs his or her own meaning in the content. It is clear that Edward understands this principle, because he was taught in the same manner both as a learner and as a pre-service Accounting teacher.

As I have mentioned before, the above essences of Edward's experiences are what Husserl (1983) refers to as 'the things in themselves'. There are two main aspects that emerged from Edward's childhood experiences, namely, his father's rational persuasive powers directing him towards becoming a teacher, as opposed to a traffic officer, because it would lead to a better life, and the teaching strategies he was exposed to as a learner and pre-service Accounting teacher. The bad experience with his Grade 9 Accounting teacher, who was not qualified to teach the subject, was turned around in Grade 10. This Grade 10 teacher, whom Edward described as *very good* because she was qualified to teach Accounting, introduced him to the teaching strategy which he has been applying in his own Accounting classes throughout his teaching career. The teaching strategies his lecturers at Bellville Training College used complemented the one his high school Accounting teacher used. Edward is therefore well-grounded in a teaching strategy that allows learners to think, to solve problems on their own, and to make meaning from the information they are presented with. This teaching strategy matches what is expected of him in the CAPS today.

#### c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

Edward grew up in Mount Pleasant, a small town close to the well-known holiday coastal town of Hermanus in the Western Cape during the 1960s and 1970s. During this time South Africa experienced the worst years of racial oppression. In contrast to the scenic town of Hermanus (sometimes referred to as the 'Village of the Sea' or the 'Riviera of the South') which was (and still is) known for its fynbos<sup>21</sup> and offers the best land-based whale watching in the world, Mount

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<sup>21</sup> Fynbos: a distinctive type of vegetation found only on the southern tip of Africa. It includes a very wide range of plant species, particularly small heather-like trees and shrubs.



Pleasant was a town inhabited by coloureds and situated on arid land. Many of the men were tradesmen and the women domestic aids to the white households in Hermanus. Not much has changed over the years, except that many blacks have also moved into the town and surrounding area living alongside the coloureds. Eventually many more Blacks moved into the surrounding area of this small town, which led to the development of a township on the outskirts of Mount Pleasant called Zwelihle. Based on the fact that Edward did not want to speak much about the community in which he grew up, it can be assumed that they (and most of the residents in Mount Pleasant as most other coloured people in South Africa) lived in poverty, unlike the Whites living 1 km away in the affluent town of Hermanus.

What is quite apparent in Edward's constituent profile are the values his father (a carpenter who wanted to be a lawyer if he had the opportunity) taught him, for example, *people must trust you ... you must respect other people to have their respect, and never take anything from someone else that doesn't belong to you*. His father also taught him that he *should be a person other people could look up to and other people would want to be connected with ... [and] ... to be the person other people would want to be with or work with* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>9-10</sub>). Edward states that this is *also how I see my life* (latter part of P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>10</sub>). Heidegger's (1927/1967) 'transparent coping' is evident in Edward's life in the latter part of his statements in P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>9-10</sub> above, namely, the phrase 'also how I see my life'. This phrase assumes that he copes in life by applying the values his father taught him.

Edward's father wanted him *to become something in life ... [to] have a good career ... a lifetime career* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>13-14</sub>). This statement could be interpreted as the family was not financially advantaged and therefore, Edward's father wanted a better life for his children. His father was the driving force in Edward's life, while his mother simply followed through with his father's dream for the family. This is evident in the statement *... my mother just supported him ... my father was the one guiding and pushing us* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>8</sub>). Again, I refer to Koopman's (2017) statement regarding parents wanting the best for their children by keeping them in check. Edward wanted to become a traffic officer, but his father steered him into

a different career - one that he described as *a good future ... a good career ...* and [he] *had to become something in life* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>6,8,13</sub>).

Edward attended schools that were reserved for coloureds. These schools are now referred to as historically disadvantaged schools. Historically disadvantaged schools were not well resourced, but similar to historically advantaged schools also adopted policies, curricula and syllabic content that promoted technical knowledge. Similar to historically advantaged schools, this knowledge also did not aim to challenge children intellectually about the nature, history, politics and purposes of their disciplines, but focused on the memorisation of concepts and definitions. The dominant approach to teaching and learning was a teacher-centred approach.

Edward had a rocky introduction to Accounting in Grade 9. In his own words, he stated: *In Standard 7 (now Grade 9) I had difficulty with Accounting because the teacher wasn't a trained Accounting teacher. Edward explained that this teacher just worked from the text book ... explained things that was written in the text book and sometimes he used the answer book* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>20</sub>). This situation is not different to Schreuder's (2009) findings in which she highlights that many learners are not prepared for Grade 10 Accounting because some Grade 9 EMS teachers are not qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the subject. Despite struggling with Accounting in Grade 9, he decided to continue with the subject because he *enjoyed it* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>18</sub>).

Fortunately, in Grade 10 the situation was quite different. Edward described his Grades 10 to 12 Accounting teacher as *very good* [because] *she was a trained Accounting teacher ... we enjoyed being in her class* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>19</sub>). He described this teacher's teaching strategy in the statement labelled P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>22</sub>.

After Grade 12, Edward went to Bellville Training College, where he majored in Afrikaans and Accounting. As mentioned in section 5.5.2 (c) above, the South African educational landscape consisted of 32 autonomous universities and technikons, and 105 colleges of education (Braun, 2015). It was at one of these colleges of education where Edward received his training as an Accounting

teacher. During the time Edward did his pre-service teacher training, Bellville Training College was situated in Bellville South. As mentioned in Chapter Four, section 4.3.1 (a) Bellville South was classified as a coloured community. The lecturers at these colleges were state employed and had to engage with externally framed curricula and examinations. This meant that the apartheid state decided what skills, knowledge and values future teachers should have when they enter the profession. To exacerbate the situation more and to take greater control over the training of these pre-service teachers, lecturers had to teach full timetables as no research demands were placed on them (Parker and Adler, 2005). This meant that the apartheid state controlled the education that prepared teachers like Edward and many others who chose to become teachers under apartheid and study at one of these colleges of education. Edward mentioned that his lecturers at Bellville Training College employed question-and-answer and problem-solving teaching methods. He explained that *students were given a question (exercise) and then had to come with the solution* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>29</sub>). As a pre-service teacher he used some of these methods and sometimes adjusted these methods to his own needs (see P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>30</sub>). The lecturers at Bellville Training College and his Grades 10 to 12 Accounting teacher therefore used an interactive approach – an approach Edward mentioned he still uses because *it has worked for [him] and believe[s] [this method] will work for other learners as well* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>23</sub>).

d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Merleau-Ponty suggests that our perception is continually changing (that is, our world is always changing), meaning that we are continually updating our perceptions. In other words, our perceptual world changes based on our experience, and consequently the world looks different to us the more we learn about it.

In contrast to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) proposes that one experiences objects or phenomena through the body and the world, therefore one's experiences are not independent of the world. As I mentioned in section 5.6.1 (d) of this chapter, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) implies that learning is not an intellectually constructed activity, but an 'embodied' engagement influenced by

the ‘conditions of existence’ or ‘enabling conditions’. Therefore, Edward’s thinking has been shaped by his embodied experiences which form his field of perception, or as Merleau-Ponty refers to it, the “phenomenal field” (1945/1962, pp. 52-63), meaning the field of perceptual experience.

By statements such as, *teaching is a sure career, ... had to become something in life – have a good career, ... teaching is ... a lifetime career ...* Edward’s father created the ‘enabling conditions’ that shaped Edward’s perception. As he experienced the world through his body, or as he learned more and more about the world, Edward’s childhood career goal changed from wanting to be a *traffic officer* to one of becoming a teacher. Indirectly his father taught Edward that he had to choose a career that would benefit him financially. The consistent motivation by his father awakened Edward’s primary attention, which subsequently lead him to internalise those words subconsciously. In other words, that which was invisible was made visible through the imaginative abilities of the mind.

When he started doing Accounting in Grade 9, Edward struggled with the subject. However, the situation improved when a new teacher, who used a different teaching strategy, taught him from Grade 10 to Grade 12. His lecturers at Bellville Training College used the same interactive approach as his teacher in Grades 10 to 12. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.2.3, it is through the body that the individual comes into contact with the world and gets to know the world. This interactive approach was embedded in Edward’s subconscious and became the teaching strategy he implemented (or mirrored) throughout his teaching career *because it worked* for him and he believes that *it will work for other learners as well* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>23</sub>).

### 5.9.2 Part two of the interview

#### a) Constructing the constituent profile

Part one of the interview with Edward concentrated mainly on his childhood and early adulthood experiences, for example, where he grew up, attended high school, his father’s influence on him becoming an Accounting teacher, his high

school Accounting teacher, and his pre-service teacher training at Bellville Training College. In order to understand his professional journey, the second part of the interview explored how he experienced his professional context (lived space) and his experiences of the Accounting curriculum with the focus on the challenges, concerns and his active engagement with the Accounting curriculum.

I commenced by asking Edward to give me a brief summary of his teaching career, for example, where, when, and how he started out in his first post until he ended up at School E. He charted his journey as follows:

*<sup>1/</sup>My first teaching post was in Grabouw, at Groenberg Secondary school. That year they opened so, we worked from nothing ... from scratch ... we had to grow the school. I was there for one year. And then I went to Heideveld High School. I was there for a month. I then went to Swartberg in Caledon, because that was nearer to my house, better for me. I taught there from 1984 until 1993, and then in 1994, I came to Hawston, so I am here since 1994 ... at this school.*

To my question on whether he had a mentor to guide him when he started to teach at Groenberg Secondary School and if not how did he experience settling into the teaching profession, he replied:

*<sup>2/</sup>No, there was no mentor for me. There was the subject head ... she sometimes came to assist me, but she wasn't my mentor. She left in August that same year, and I was asked to be the subject head in her place ... with eight months experience.*

I asked him to relay his experiences of being thrown into that leadership position so early in his career. He stated that:

*<sup>3/</sup>It made me a very strong person because <sup>4/</sup>I had to be the Accounting teacher for Grades 9 to 12. I had to be the subject head for Accounting, Business Economics, Economics, and Typing. ...furthermore, during exam times, I had to prepare the question papers of the entire school. I had to do moderation, and I had to mark. <sup>5/</sup>It was difficult, but I enjoyed it. <sup>6/</sup>I had to teach myself because I did not have the last three subjects at Bellville*

*Training College. I believed that in the end it would pay off for me ... I would reap the dividends.*

He continued to chart his journey to his current position at School E as follows:

*<sup>7/</sup>In 1993 this school [School E] was born and the department was looking for an acting principal. <sup>8/</sup>My principal at Swartberg forwarded my name to be the acting principal of the school because he knew that I was prepared to walk the extra mile. So, I came here as the acting principal. They appointed a principal the following year. <sup>9/</sup> I stayed on at the school in a permanent HOD position and was appointed deputy principal in 2008. I did not apply for the position as principal [back in 1994] because when I was acting ... I gave my best. You know, the deputy is the heartbeat of the school. In fact he runs the school ... the principal is just a manager. I enjoy being the deputy. I don't ever want to be a principal ...it is too difficult. At that time it was easier ... now the education department places too many demands on a principal.*

With regards to furthering his qualifications, he explained:

*<sup>10/</sup>In 1993 I did a Business Management course at Intec Distance Education College. And in 2010 I did the ACE: Accounting course. I also did the ACE: School Leadership course [to] improve my leadership skills at this school. So, when I was given the opportunity to do the ACE: School Leadership and Management course through the Department of Education (in 2013) ... I just decided that is what I wanted to do.*

To my question on his experience of studying part-time and how supportive his principal was on the matter, he declared:

*<sup>11/</sup>It is very challenging, but the main fact is that time management is very important because you have to do your work [and] devote time to your studies ... you have to do it in the evening. Luckily for me, we didn't have very much exams, so that helped ... only the assignments.*

<sup>12/</sup>*The principal was very supportive. When I did the ACE: Accounting course he was very supportive. I could easily get time off for attending anything. I could use the school's facilities, like duplicating or any other thing, and when I did the ACE: School Leadership and Management course, he was also doing it ... so we supported each other.*

His response concerning how he experienced his first few years of teaching FET Accounting at School E was as follows:

<sup>13/</sup>*In 1994, we had 15 Grade 11s and 18 Grade 10s ... that was the norm.*

<sup>14/</sup>*In 2014, I ended up with 6 learners in Grade 12.* <sup>15/</sup>*At this school Accounting isn't a very popular subject. Each year there are between 10 and 15 learners who choose to do Accounting.*

When I enquired why this is the case, he replied disheartened:

<sup>16/</sup>*They struggle with the content in Grades 10 and 11 because our EMS teacher isn't a trained Accounting teacher. He does not motivate the Grade 9s to carry on with Accounting. The way he teaches the subject doesn't motivate them to do Accounting. He is not passionate about the subject. We have four Grade 9 EMS classes. [He is teaching EMS] because he taught the subject at primary school and there is no other teacher at the school who can teach EMS. He majored in History and Afrikaans. He is not trained in any business subject.*

His tone lightened as he continued:

<sup>17/</sup>*However, the lady teaching EMS to the Grade 8s this year will most probably teach the Grade 9s next year. She is trained to teach Business Studies, EMS, and CAT, but not FET Accounting. However, she did basic Accounting at school and during her first and second years at CPUT.*

Again he continued in a discouraged tone:

<sup>18/</sup>*The leader of the school is more concerned about other subjects, so that is why the school management team first caters for the other subjects.* <sup>19/</sup>*They want to remove it from our subject choices. They reckon for me to have 10 learners doing Accounting in Grade 10, whereas the Consumer Studies teacher has 50 learners is not fair.*

*In 2014 there were no Grade 10 learners doing Accounting. This year (2016) there are 11 Grade 10s. Last year there were 220 Grade 9s ... 11 of them decided to do Accounting. I am the only FET Accounting teacher but because I have so few students I also have another teaching subject ... Tourism.*

Finally, he mentioned that:

*<sup>20/</sup>The learners are very positive ... they try their best, but because of their weak foundation in Accounting they sometimes struggle. I have tried many ways of presenting, but they still struggle. Because learners struggle with the content, I am of the opinion that perhaps we don't have very strong learners.*

When I asked him about his views on the differences between the old (NATED Report 550) and new curricula (NCS and the CAPS) and how he copes with the challenges, he sighed and responded as follows:

*<sup>21/</sup>I think the old curriculum was the best. <sup>22/</sup>Learners could easily apply it in the business world. With their knowledge of the Cash Book ... payments and receipts ... they could easily go into the business world and do the cash receipts and cash payments, or go into a non-profit organisation and be a treasurer ... doing the Cash Book with payments and receipts. <sup>23/</sup>It was easier to teach the content compared to today.*

He expanded on his experiences regarding the differences in the content and how it makes him feel in an annoyed tone:

*<sup>24/</sup>In the 80s and 90s the learner was just taught the content ... how to draw up a Balance Sheet, how to complete a Cash Receipts Journal, Cash Payments Journal, or how to do a Profit and Loss account. <sup>25/</sup>Nowadays, they are asked to give their comments. <sup>26/</sup>There are too many interpretation and analysing questions for the learners nowadays. <sup>27/</sup>It always gets a bit more difficult for the learners. The standard of the content is too high for the learners. <sup>28/</sup>They change the content without taking the learner into consideration. <sup>29/</sup>Sometimes you become very resistant ... because of all the changes. One has just managed the new content when a new one surfaces.*



To my question on what he does to motivate the learners, that is, to get them to think critically about analysing/interpreting financial statements, he replied:

<sup>30/</sup>*Here at this school I normally use previous exam papers to guide them how to do the interpretation, but in the exam there are different questions ... and they have to think on another level.*

He added:

<sup>31/</sup>*That is basically why there is a drop in the Accounting students ... because of the content. In 2014 there was a drop of 1 300 Accounting learners in the Western Cape. This is very problematic for Accounting.* <sup>32/</sup>*I don't think that teachers struggle with presenting the content.* <sup>33/</sup>*In my case, I do not have very strong learners. They have not been taught the basics in Grade 9, therefore they are not very keen to interpret or analyse aspects. And... it's not only Accounting, it's the same for Mathematics Literacy and Business Economics.*

With regards to the situation of Accounting as a subject, I enquired how this makes him feel as a teacher, a person, and/or a citizen of South Africa. He stated in a distressed tone:

<sup>34/</sup>*This is a big concern ... where are we going? What type of learner will we have in five years' time? People must take this country forward. If they don't want to think today, how will they think in five years' time ... when they have to make important decisions?*

On the aspect of whether or not there are adequate teaching and learning materials to complement his teaching strategies, Edward said:

<sup>35/</sup>*There's sufficient teaching and learning materials. However, if I don't have enough textbooks I arrange with [the more affluent high school in the area] to give me some of theirs. Some of the classes have whiteboards ... and others have the normal chalkboard. During the first term we received data projectors and laptops for 12 teachers out of the 22 (can be cross-referenced with Chapter Four, section 4.3.5 b).*

He added with excitement:

*<sup>36/</sup>I was one of the lucky teachers to receive a whiteboard and a data projector ... and it motivated me to come up with new ideas. I am using technology and the internet more and more in class.*

The following excerpt accentuates his sentiments on the training received from district offices of the WCED on the CAPS:

*... in fact, <sup>37/</sup>it isn't training because it is a one-day workshop. <sup>38/</sup>Every term there is a workshop for the next term's content ... it's more ... informing you. <sup>39/</sup>It is from 09:00 until 13:00. So, in four hours I have to learn the content for the next eight weeks very quickly. When we had Grade 10s for CAPS, we had the training for Grade 11. You forget what you have learned the previous year. <sup>40/</sup>Training should be over a longer period and on a regular basis. <sup>41/</sup>The training is not interactive ... it is more Power point presentations. [It was] <sup>42/</sup>more on content than on the pedagogical skill needed to teach Accounting.*

To my question on whether he thinks this is still the right profession for him, he confirmed:

*<sup>43/</sup>I enjoy being a teacher. I want to be at work every day. I enjoy being with my colleagues. I enjoy teaching Accounting ...and Tourism. [But] <sup>44/</sup>I think that I have served my purpose in education. I have achieved everything that I wanted to do or be ... [therefore] I would like to end my teaching career in two years' time ... 2018.*

In the construction of the constituent profile, I identified 44 NUMs, labelled as P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>44</sub>. P<sub>2</sub> refers to part two of the interview after which each code follows chronologically ranging from 1 to 44. These codes will now be used to craft the descriptive narrative below as well as the interpretive narrative and anticipatory interpretive narrative which follow further down.

#### b) Crafting the descriptive narrative

In order to understand the consciousness of human beings, we first of all need to know their lifeworld. Norlyk, Martinsen and Dahlberg (2013) describe the

lifeworld as “our everyday existence in and through which we live our lives” (p. 4). In describing the experiences of human beings, Husserl (1967) notes that as a researcher one has to go ‘back to the things themselves’. In other words, in this narrative, I had to steer clear of interpreting Edward’s experiences.

In the construction of the Husserlian descriptive narrative the themes that emerged in the constituent profile above will be used to extract the essences of his experiences: (i) the challenges and concerns he experiences in teaching Accounting; (ii) his views about his principal and the district offices concerning support to effectively teach the content; and (iii) his perceptions of the latest curriculum (CAPS) and all previous curricula during post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

Edward completed his teacher’s qualification at Bellville Training College in 1979. His teaching career started at Groenberg High school in Grabouw. It was the inception year of the school, which meant that Edward and all the other staff had to *work from nothing ... from scratch ... [they] had to grow the school* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub>). Eight months into his teaching career his subject head left and he was asked to take over as acting subject head (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>2</sub>). He related that this experience *made [him] a very strong person because [he] had to be the Accounting teacher for Grades 9 to 12; the subject head for Accounting, Business Economics, Economics, and Typing; during exam times [he] had to prepare the question papers of the entire school, do moderation, and [he] had to mark* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>3-4</sub>). Edward remarked that it was *difficult* because he did not do Business Economics, Economics or Typing at the college. However, he *enjoyed it* because he believed that it would be to his advantage in the long run (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>5-6</sub>). A year later he accepted a post at Heideveld High school and a month later he started at Swartberg High school in Caledon, because it was closer to home (Mount Pleasant). He taught at Swartberg High school for 10 years. In 1994 he started at School E as an Acting-Principal. When a Principal was appointed at the end of that year, he remained at School E as the Accounting HOD and was eventually appointed Deputy-Principal in 2008 (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub>; P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>7-9</sub>). Edward did not apply for the position as Principal at School E (back in 1994), because he does not *ever want to be a principal* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>9</sub>).

Over the years Edward has completed several additional qualifications not only to increase his content knowledge, but also to improve his leadership skills. These courses are: a Business Management course at Intec Distance Education College in 1993, the ACE: Accounting course in 2010 and 2011, as well as the ACE: School Leadership and Management course in 2013. Both these ACE courses were offered by the Department of Education (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>10</sub>).

Edward's main struggle with Accounting at School E is that the Grade 9 EMS teacher is not trained to teach the subject at all. He is trained to teach History and Afrikaans. Learners are therefore not confident in their ability to do Accounting as an FET subject (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>16</sub>). There has been a gradual drop in the number of learners choosing Accounting as an FET subject over the last 20 years. So much so that there were no learners doing Accounting in Grade 10 in 2014. The principal is not concerned about the low numbers of Grade 9 learners choosing Accounting for Grade 10. He and the school management team want to remove it from the school's subject choices. Their justification is that Consumer Studies is a much more popular subject than Accounting and they would much rather employ a teacher for this subject. Edward is the only FET Accounting teacher and because he has does not have many students he also teaches Tourism (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>18-19</sub>). The fact that there is a steady decline in the number of Accounting learners, not only at his school but in the country, is alarming for Edward (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>31</sub>). He is concerned about the type of learner the country will have in a few years' time. He shudders to think that if they (learners) *don't want to think today, how they will think in five years' time ... when they have to make important decisions* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>34</sub>).

In contrast to the above situation where the principal does not support the continuation of the subject of Accounting at School E, he fully supported Edward in his part-time studies. The comment labelled P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>12</sub> confirms this statement.

Except for the lack of Accounting textbooks, School E has sufficient basic teaching and learning resources to complement Edward's teaching strategies. This is verified in statement labelled P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>35</sub>.

Edward is extremely excited that he *was one of the lucky teachers to receive a whiteboard and a data projector and that it [has] motivated [him] to come up with new ideas* and he is *using technology and the internet more and more in class* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>36</sub>).

He considered the training he received from the district office of the WCED on the CAPS as ineffective. The statements labelled P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>37-42</sub> emphasises his frustration.

Edward's views on the old curriculum (NATED Report 550) and the newer curricula (NCS and the CAPS) are that *the old curriculum was the best ... and that ... learners could easily apply it in the business world as well as ... it was easier to teach the content compared to today* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>21</sub>; P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>23</sub>). He emphasised that learners could easily apply the content of the old curriculum (namely that of the Cash Book with its receipts and payments) in the business world (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>22</sub>). In an annoyed tone he stressed that during the 1980s and 1990s learners were simply taught the content (for example, how to draw up a Balance Sheet), but nowadays they need to interpret financial statements. He is of the opinion that there is too much emphasis on interpretation and analysis and that *the standard of the content is too high for the learners* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>24-27</sub>). In order to motivate learners or to guide them on how to answer the questions on interpretation and analysis of financial statements, Edward uses previous question papers. However, he added that the questions might be different in the examination and that learners *have to think on another level* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>30</sub>). He strongly believes that the learners continue to struggle with the subject throughout the FET Band, because they do not have a solid foundation of the basics, that is, Grade 9 Accounting.

Despite the disheartening situation surrounding FET Accounting at his school, Edward still enjoys being a teacher. He *want[s] to be at work every day ... [he] enjoys being with his colleagues ... [he] enjoys teaching Accounting*. However, he stated that he has *achieved everything that [he] wanted to do or be ...* and he wants to end his teaching career at the end of 2018 (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>43-44</sub>).

c) Crafting the interpretive narrative

By drawing on Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein*, this section focuses on Edward's (i) challenges and concerns in teaching Accounting; (ii) views about the support of his principal and the Department of Education (WCED); and (iii) perceptions of the CAPS and all previous curricula during post-apartheid South Africa compared to the apartheid curriculum.

Edward started his teaching career at a high school in Grabouw. He said that it was a new school, *so [they] worked from nothing ... from scratch* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub>). Eight months into his first year of teaching his subject head left and he had to take over the role as subject head for Accounting, Business Economics, Economics and Typing. As a young inexperienced teacher he was thrown into the deep end early in his career. As subject head of three subjects this meant that he had to work extremely hard during that time (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>4</sub>). However, he persevered because he believed that it would be to his advantage one day (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>6</sub>). Edward was 'pressing towards an objective', in Heidegger's (1927/1967) terms. His objective was to gain enough experience which would be beneficial to his career. He taught at this school for one year and after this he taught at a high school in Heideveld for one month. After his one-month stint at the school in Heideveld, he took up a teaching position at a high school in Caledon (namely, Swartberg High School) to be closer to home, that is, Mount Pleasant (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub>). He taught at this school for ten years, after which he left for School E, where he is currently teaching (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>1</sub>). He has been at School E since 1994 – just one year after the inception of school. He had therefore been at School E for twenty-three years up until the time of the interview. Edward landed up at School E as the Acting-Principal upon the recommendation of his principal, at Swartberg High School, to the WCED (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>8</sub>). When the school appointed an official principal the following year, Edward stayed on in a permanent HOD position and was appointed Deputy-Principal in 2008 (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>9</sub>).

Edward is sufficiently qualified to teach Accounting and to be in a leadership position at a school. When he was not satisfied with the content knowledge he needed in his first year of teaching – that is, when he was plunged into the

position as acting subject head of Accounting, Business Economics, Economics and Typing – he enrolled for a course in Business Management at Intec Distance Education College (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>10</sub>). At the time it was important to him to execute the task as acting subject head to the best of his ability. Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world (or *Dasein* as disposition) applies to Edward's situation when he had to pay attention to (nebulous) aspects of his work that needed his urgent attention. Many years later when the Department of Education offered Advanced Certificates of Education courses in various areas, Edward enrolled for the ACE: Accounting (2010) and ACE: School Leadership and Management (2013) courses (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>10</sub>). Although it was *challenging* to study part-time, his *principal was very supportive* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>11</sub>; P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>12</sub> for full details).

Edward is gravely concerned with the situation of Accounting at School E. He reported that since 1994 the norm was between 15 and 18 learners for Grades 10 to 12. This number has plummeted significantly since then and in 2014 there were only 6 learners doing Accounting in Grade 12 (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>13-14</sub>). I was not surprised when he added, disheartened, that their Grade 9 EMS teacher *is not trained in any business subject*, but is trained to teach *History and Afrikaans* (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>16</sub>). Based on my own experience in Accounting and in the light of Schreuder's (2009) study, it is crucial that learners are firmly grounded in the basic principles of Accounting in Grades 8 and 9 before they can continue with FET Accounting. In a lighter, somewhat relieved tone, Edward mentioned that the school employed a qualified EMS teacher for the Grade 8s in 2016, who will most probably take over teaching the Grade 9s in 2017 (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>17</sub>). Despite the fact that learners struggle with the content, Edward mentions that their attitude towards the subject (Accounting) is *very positive ... [and] they try their best* (for full details refer P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>20</sub>).

Edward explains, discouraged, that the principal together with the school management team want to remove Accounting as a subject choice (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>18-19</sub>). According to the Association for the Advancement of Black Accountants in Southern Africa (2016), the shortage of skilled accountants at all levels across the economy is critical. In addition, they state that African and

coloured candidates make up only 13% of the registered members (2016). It is crucial that principals realise the importance of the role of Accountants in society and therefore encourage especially black and coloured children to do Accounting at high school.

When he started his teaching career in Grabouw Edward taught the old curriculum, namely, the NATED Report 550. Therefore, when asked about his perceptions on the differences between the old (NATED Report 550) and new curricula (NCS and CAPS) and how he copes with these challenges, his response and the sigh that accompanied it did not astonish me:

*I think the old curriculum was the best ... It was easier to teach the content compared to today (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>21-29</sub>).*

In parts of P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>20</sub> Edward mentioned that he has *tried many ways of presenting, but they (learners) still struggle ....* He is therefore of the opinion that their school does not have *very strong learners*. In the excerpt above, he concludes that *the standard of the content is too high for the learners* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>27</sub>). Schreuder (2014) avers that many teachers continue to use traditional teaching strategies. It is not clear exactly what these different teaching strategies are that Edward uses. In their study on the role of motivation, strategies and perceived factors hindering students from learning, Gbollie and Keamu (2017) found that “students with good levels of motivational beliefs are capable of using numerous learning strategies” (p. 9). This implies that it does not matter which teaching strategies a teacher employs, because highly motivated students will find a way to understand the content. In statement P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>30</sub> Edward mentioned that he tries to motivate learners by giving them *previous exam papers to guide them how to do the interpretation, but in the exam there are different questions ... and they have to think on another level*. In my opinion learners who live in a gang-infested crime-ridden area need extra motivation (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.5 (a) for a description of the context within which School E is situated). Gbollie & Keamu (2017) suggest that “teachers need to focus keen attention on motivating their students to promote their self-efficacies, always urging students to believe in their abilities to do well, and they (teachers) must also believe in their students” (p. 9). From Edward’s



tone, body language, the words or phrases he used, it seems as if he has given up all hope for his learners. As he stated in P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>20</sub> he is of the opinion that their school does *not have very strong learners*.

Edward has only been exposed to historically disadvantaged schools. This means that he not only experienced his own schooling, but also studied and later taught at schools that were not well-resourced under apartheid. Many of these schools are still (at the time of writing this dissertation) not well resourced. Edward states that *there's sufficient teaching and learning materials* at School E, and in the same breath says that *some classes have whiteboards and others have the normal chalkboard* as well as that the school has received *data projectors and laptops for 12 teachers out of the 22* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>35</sub>). Is he basing these statements on what he has been used to all these years? He proclaimed excitedly that he *was one of the lucky teachers to receive a whiteboard and a data projector ... and it motivated [him] to come up with new ideas ...* [and that he has been] *using technology and the internet more and more in class* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>36</sub>). He did not expand on how he uses technology. On the topic of textbooks he stated that if there are not sufficient, he simply arranges with the more affluent high school in the area *to give [him] some of theirs* (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>35</sub>).

Edward does not consider the training they received from the Department of Education on the new curriculum (the CAPS) as positive; in fact he pointed out that it was not training, but a four-hour workshop in which they had *to learn the content for the next eight weeks very quickly*. He believes that the *training should be over a longer period and on a regular basis*. He stated that the departmental officials mostly conveyed the new content via a PowerPoint presentation without much discussion. He believes that the department should concentrate more *on the pedagogical skill needed to teach Accounting* instead of focusing only on presenting the new content (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>37-42</sub>). Although the study conducted by Bantwini (2015) was based on science teachers' complaints regarding inadequate support received from their district officials in the implementation of a curriculum policy, the findings also relate to this study. Similar to this study, Bantwini's (2015) study revealed that teachers considered

this lack of support as a barrier for their development and implementation of a new curriculum.

Although Edward still enjoys being a teacher, he wants to resign in two years' time (2018), because he believes that he has *served* [his] *purpose in education* and has achieved what he set out to do (for full details refer P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>43-44</sub>).

d) Crafting the anticipatory interpretive narrative

Merleau-Ponty emphasises that because the body is always acting and behaving in the world, the world then becomes the space that the body inhabits (1945/1962). He points out that the space a person occupies has the ability to enter the body, without the person actually reflecting upon that space, and influences the way a person feels. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, section 2.2.3 (b), when this happens the person becomes the space that he or she occupies. In an attempt to give meaning to Edward's lived world, in this section I provide an anticipatory interpretive narrative on his lived space and how it influences him.

Merleau-Ponty refers to the 'enabling conditions' that shape one's experiences through time and space. Although people have similar experiences, each person could have a different perception of the same object or phenomena. The reason that each person has a different perception of a similar experience is that experiences organise themselves in a different way for each person depending on that person's existing perception of the object or phenomena. Throughout his life Edward has only been exposed to the environment around and to historically disadvantaged schools – this includes the college where he received his pre-service teacher training. Based on my own experience, these institutions have always been under-resourced. For full details refer to Chapter Four, section 4.3.5 (a) and (b) for a description of the geographic environment and the specific context within which School E is situated. Edward's lived space has been significantly shaped by these (inadequately) 'enabling conditions' to such an extent that he has reached a stage of hopelessness. This is evident in his statements labelled P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>20</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>33</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>34</sub>.

Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), one could posit that an individual is always trying to get a better grip on reality, as a form of coping, via the ‘intentional arc’ (see section 5.6.1 (d) of this chapter). Edward has a specific perception about the space in which he has been placed, therefore as a form of coping he has become that space. In his perception, he has a ‘maximum grip’ on his reality.

## 5.10 Summary

In this chapter I focused on the data explication process. In order to give the reader an understanding of how each narrative was constructed, I provided a discussion on Husserl’s ‘lifeworld theory’, Heidegger’s theory of *Dasein*, and Merleau-Ponty’s ‘lived body theory’ in the first section of this chapter. In the second part of this chapter, I presented these three types of narratives for each research participant. Firstly, I presented Natural Units of Meaning (NUMs) or essences derived from the interviews by crafting a constituent profile. Secondly, the constituent profile was used as a basis to craft a Husserlian descriptive narrative. Husserl believed that the researcher should not interpret experience, but that experience should be presented ‘as is’, that is, without any bias. Thirdly, the descriptive narrative served as a useful basis for using Heidegger’s theory of *Dasein* to analyse each research participant’s experience by adding an ontological aspect to it. The addition of an ontological aspect allowed me to present a more rigorous description of the lifeworld of each Accounting teacher. Finally, I presented an anticipatory interpretive narrative by drawing on the ‘lived body theory’ of Merleau-Ponty. The ‘lived body’ theory proved useful to capture the impact of time and space on the lifeworld of each teacher.

In the next chapter, I will provide a brief discussion on the findings. I will also present my own reflections, identify possibilities for future research, and make recommendations where needed.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

And we, living men on whom all this converges, what have we to do with this world and this history? (Merleau-Ponty, in Rabil, 1967, p. 143)

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In Chapter Five I provided a succinct overview of the ‘life world’ of each research participant, followed by a subjective interpretive explication narrative expressed within their interpretive realities. Considering the data as a whole, I then sketched an anticipatory interpretive narrative in order to understand how the ‘conditions of existence’ may have shaped participants’ actions and behaviour in the future. In this anticipatory interpretive narrative, I emphasise that thinking is not only a function of brain activity (or what Descartes refers to as *cogito* customary in the Western tradition, according to Husserl, 1967), but according to Merleau-Ponty, it is a function of the wholeness of the body.

In this chapter I first summarise the data in line with the aims of the study and also provide a coherent summary of the significance of the findings to the field. To this end, I compare the findings as chronicled by each research participants’ lived experiences by focusing on both similarities and differences regarding (i) their childhood experiences and experiences as learners of Accounting; (ii) their experiences of pre-service teacher training; (iii) their experiences as in-service Accounting teachers; (iv) their experiences of the curriculum; and (v) what motivates them to do what they do (or what motivates them to remain in the teaching profession). Here the focus is on explaining the epistemic roots of participants’ consciousness as they reflected on their experiences. Heidegger (1927/1967) contends that we as individuals (or in this study the teachers) find ourselves in conditions that shape our modes of ‘being’, ‘thinking’ and ‘acting’ in the situation. Thus, the interpretive realities of these teachers are an outward revelation of how they experienced the subject Accounting as learners and later in their lives as teachers. Secondly, I will provide a synthesis of the findings by explaining the theoretical and practical contribution of this study. In this section I

will provide a succinct narrative of the importance and role of the body within *currere*. My main focus will be on how this study expands on William Pinar's and Ted Aoki's notion of *currere* with specific reference to 'embodied knowledge'. Thirdly, I discuss the implications of the findings, followed by the recommendations for further study. Finally, I conclude with some personal reflective comments on my journey as a novice phenomenological researcher.

## 6.2 Summary of childhood experiences and as learners of Accounting

Standish (2016) draws on the significance of Aristotelian insights when he avers that a person should be seen and understood in the context of his or her form and structure – also referred to as 'causa formalis' (p. 98) – which is often acquired through an educational process. He writes 'the child, however incapable it may be in the early months of its life, is to be understood in terms of the human: a baby is a human by virtue of its form' (p. 99). The findings showed how all five research participants were shaped and formed under the watchful eyes of their parents. As each of the five participants reflected on their childhood experiences their body language, non-verbal cues, facial expressions and eyes were reconstructing those fond memories, especially when they described the roles of their parents in their lives. For example, Abigail's father taught her the importance of *punctuality, how to act in public, and to respect people*<sup>22</sup> (P<sub>1</sub>A<sub>5-9</sub>), while Bryan, with great admiration, described his father as his *mentor* and as someone who taught him *everything he knows... even his values* (P<sub>1</sub>B<sub>3-5</sub>). Claire shared the same views about her father when she pointed out how during school holidays she *looked forward to spending [time] with him* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>15</sub>). Moreover, his hard work and ethical conduct inspired her to follow in his footsteps. She said *He was actually very hard working .... That is why since I was in Grade 1, the only thing that I wanted to do was to become a teacher* (P<sub>1</sub>C<sub>10-12</sub>). Deidre echoed these sentiments: *I was very happy while growing up* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>4</sub>) and noted how well she got along with both parents, who taught her the importance of being *dedicated*, and of

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<sup>22</sup> Note: In this chapter the direct words, phrases and /or sentences of the research participants (Abigail, Bryan, Claire, Deidre, and Edward) are in *italics*.

*loyalty and to take pride in your work* (P<sub>1</sub>D<sub>10-12</sub>). Edward stated that his father taught him a lot of lessons in life such as how to win people's trust, respect for others and the valuable principle of honesty. He pointed out that up until this day he holds those important lessons very dear: *so, that is also how I see my life* (P<sub>1</sub>E<sub>9-10</sub>).

Apart from all these wonderful life lessons, principles and values that each participant's parents taught them, they also explained how they ended up in the teaching profession. While Abigail, Deidre, Claire and Edward realised this career path whilst at school, Bryan only realised it while at university. Edward, who initially wanted to become a traffic officer, was persuaded by his father to rather become a teacher. He pointed out that he never regretted following the advice of his father. Although growing up in different parts of South Africa, in different contexts and under different conditions, the research participants share many similar experiences with respect to the roles that their parents played in their lives during their childhood years.

The main thrust of their relationships with their parents reveals that their space of reason or knowledge about the world, although not of their making, goes all the way back to their childhood experiences. It is as if the conceptual capacities of their parents circulate in their inner landscapes not only as a form of knowing, but also as a way of 'being'. For example, Edward said *that is how I see my life*, while Deidre expressed this as *Loyalty was important to them* [parents]. *I think that is why I have been at [School D] for twenty-two years now*. Claire mentioned that since childhood she *always knew that* [she] *want[ed] to follow in her father's footsteps*. These experiences can also be explained through what McDowell (1996, p. 91) refers to as a form of "naturalism of second nature". According to McDowell (1996), when humans are raised in terms of ethical principles, this leads them to a particular normative logical space which manifests in adulthood. This is important because, when children follow the advice of their parents or mimic their parents' actions, the experiences enter into the children's consciousness and influence how they act and behave in the community.

Therefore, the implication is that when parents guide their child, whether through advice or in action, that experience gives form and structure to a child's perceptual world. These perceptions are not 'embodied knowledge' that is felt through experience, but relational knowledge gained from the spoken words or actions of others.

In view of the above discussion, the same can be said about how they experienced Accounting as a school subject, when they were introduced to it as learners. For example, Abigail, Claire and Edward describe their teachers as *very good* and state how they *enjoyed* the subject. Bryan, on the other hand, did not mention the role his teacher played and whether or not she was 'a good Accounting teacher'. He stated that *I was a very shy person ... I did not perform well, because I did not feel comfortable in that class*. Consequently, he described the subject as *very difficult*, resulting in him failing it in Grade 10. The experience of failure traumatised him to the extent that he had to struggle on his own and find his own way of on-going coping with the challenge. All their stories arrived at through experiences with Accounting as children should be viewed as judgments based on their impressions and sensibilities arrived at through their subjective connectedness to the space. The quality and intensity of the connectedness to the space as learners developed a need to become Accounting teachers. In part two of the interviews, we see an association between how they were taught to think and learn Accounting as learners and how they mirrored some of these experiences in their own practices as teachers.

### **6.3 Summary of Accounting pre-service teacher training**

According to Schatzki (2001), a 'practice' is an embodied array of human activities centrally arranged and organised around practically shared experiences. When they enrolled for their pre-service training as teachers, the participants were introduced by their lecturers to the practice of teaching Accounting. The findings showed how all research participants experienced their pre-service Accounting teacher training at various institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Abigail started her professional journey by enrolling for a three-year TD: Comm

(Teacher's Diploma: Commerce) at a technikon, where the focus of the content leaned more towards covering the school syllabi. This is substantiated by her statement: *in my third year we did the whole Grade 12 Accounting syllabus (NQF level 4) so we could teach Grade 12 even after we finished our training.* The teaching strategies employed by her lecturers are explained as *'very theoretical, kind of like – here's the work, here's the textbook and this is how you learn. You read it, remember it and try to understand it.* Their expertise was described as: *these were good lecturers because they knew their work.* Bryan, on the other hand, started out by first enrolling for a commerce degree at a university – where he was exposed to transmission-based learning where the lecturers transmitted the content and students simply had to listen and take notes. Later, when he enrolled for a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) at a different university, he was exposed to a more interactive approach to teaching where the lecturers *concentrated on the principles of the subject, and they would have discussions.* During practice teaching Bryan's mentor spoke to him *about life, and about children and how they are ... how you need to teach.* Similarly to Bryan, Claire's professional trajectory followed a path where she also first did a commerce degree at a university and then did her teacher's qualification (HDE) at the same university. Talking about her HDE year, she expressed similar sentiments about the nature of her training as Abigail, where the focus was on the school syllabi and how to teach. This is corroborated by the following statement: *they did the school syllabus and helped you with how to teach in a small way.*

Unlike Abigail and Bryan, Claire's training as a pre-service teacher was a little different in the sense that she was exposed to a social pedagogy that promoted independent learning strategies together with learning from her peers. In Claire's case, the lecturers *did not even explain the work in our lectures. We were just told what to do and we did it.* With regards to the practical, Claire noted that *they [lecturers] can't really teach you [to teach] in a classroom ... we had times that we did practicals at schools.* Deidre went to a technikon to do a three-year course in commerce, after which she went to a university to do a one-year teacher's qualification. The content covered at the technikon was *more than adequate ...*



*adequate for the Accounting syllabus in schools those years ... but the content lacked interpretation knowledge needed to teach Accounting today.* Concerning teaching strategies applied by the lecturers at the university she explained: *They were experts in their field – very good, encouraging and supportive. The method lecturers went through the school syllabus with us. They taught us the skill of teaching, how to set tests and exams, how to fill in the register, etc. We also had to do practical lessons [micro-teaching] at university.* Edward enrolled at a teacher's training college for a teaching qualification. The content covered at the teacher's training college *was very challenging because it differed from the school Accounting ... the content was more advanced than at school, where the content was very elementary.* The focus of the Subject Didactics was on *how to teach Accounting in schools.* Like Claire, Edward was also exposed to transmission-based teaching, although a bit more enlightened than the other participants, since they included some interactive and self-discovery teaching styles. This is validated by his statement *lecturers mostly used question-and-answer method ... and problem-solving.*

According to Dewey (1938), one of the most important roles of a teacher is to understand his or her learners, such as their needs, personal experiences, environment in which they grew up and then, very importantly, structure lessons around these principles. When this happens, he argues, teachers will not only prepare learners effectively, but they will also help them sufficiently to develop and grow as human beings who are open to the world with its various challenges. This means that while lecturers are training pre-service teachers, they should not only be focused on transmitting facts and rigid ideas to their students, but they should make the content explicit by linking it to real-life situations. This aspect or lack of depth in the way they were trained was echoed by Deidre, who said *the content lacked interpretation knowledge needed to teach Accounting today.* The ultimate objective of teaching is to promote learning, an aspect that was missing from their responses when they were asked to elaborate on how they were trained as pre-service teachers.

Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995) contend that teachers learned the art of teaching from their teachers when they were in primary and high school. Consequently, they perceive teaching as how their teachers modelled their lessons when they were learners. The findings in this study clearly show a match between how they were taught as learners and how they were prepared for the profession as pre-service teachers. This resemblance appears to explain why almost all the research participants in this study seem to have a very ‘superficial’ understanding of teaching in which they seem to think that a teacher’s main role is to prepare learners adequately for tests and examinations. How this perception about teaching is reflected in their practices will be discussed next.

#### **6.4 Summary as in-service Accounting teachers**

In Chapter Four I discussed the context in which each of the participants teaches. There I provided a detailed description of the geographical space as well as the context in which the research participants find themselves. Although there are vast social, cultural and economic differences between the schools, in most cases the interpretive reality is that all the teachers shared similar views about their challenges, concerns and fears that they face on (almost) a daily basis.

All the teachers in this study shared similar responses about their challenges regarding learner attitudes. For example, Abigail described the attitude of the learners as follows: *they don’t want to think ... we must think for these learners*, while Claire described them as *they don’t care ... I don’t have my books here today, so what*; Deidre mentioned that her learners do not come from a community of academics, *but a community of people who own their own businesses ... that is why the children think they don’t need education to become rich*. Surprisingly, both Bryan and Edward have different but yet similar views about their learners compared to the other participants. For example, Bryan described his learners as not the best performers academically, but they are *respectful, on task, the value system they have is different* compared to that of learners doing other subjects, because *they want to succeed, [and] they have a vision of moving on*; while Edward states that his learners are *very positive, but*

*because of their weak foundation in Accounting they sometimes struggle; he thinks that they do not have very strong learners.* Although their comments are different, all of the research participants implied that their learners are not really performing optimally academically. All of the participants, with the exception of Bryan, mentioned that learners do not perform well academically because the curriculum is too difficult, especially the section on analysis and interpretation.

On the aspect of the poorly prepared EMS learners in Grade 9 for Grade 10 Accounting, the research participants all had their own challenges and concerns. At the historically disadvantaged schools, the Grade 9 EMS teachers are not adequately trained in the Accounting aspects of the curriculum. In fact, at Edward's school the EMS Grade 9 teacher is not even trained in any business subject, but rather in History and Afrikaans. Abigail mentioned that *they just choose anybody to teach the subject, which discourages the learners to choose Accounting in Grade 10* (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>30</sub>). Bryan mentioned that their EMS teacher goes for training every year, but she still needs lots of guidance. Consequently, the Grade 10 teacher has to start with teaching all the basic Accounting principles (which was supposed to have been done in Grade 9) before he can start the Grade 10 content [see Chapter Four, section 4.3.2 (b)]. At both of the historically advantaged schools, all EMS teachers are trained to teach Accounting as well. Therefore, they do not share the same challenges and concerns regarding an EMS teacher who cannot teach Accounting, but rather have concerns regarding the curriculum. Claire mentioned that *the amount of work that they cover in Grades 8 and 9 doesn't really give you an idea of what lies ahead in Grade 10.* Deidre's concern regarding the EMS curriculum is that there is not always enough time to cover all the Accounting aspects in Grade 9. The following statement clarifies this: *Although all commerce teachers can teach Accounting, we still find that the time available to teach all the Accounting for Grade 9, is not sufficient ... Sometimes we have to repeat some of the Grade 9 content at the beginning of Grade 10* (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>21-23</sub>). Since the learners are poorly prepared in the Accounting aspects of Grade 9 EMS, they develop a low level of confidence in their ability to do Accounting, or to take Accounting, in Grade 10. This in turn leads to the

number of learners who choose to do Accounting in Grade 10 dropping. The research participants expressed a concern for the future of Accounting. For example, Deidre captured the state of Accounting when she states that *‘So, eventually what is going to happen with Accounting – the numbers are definitely dropping. Accounting is a very valuable subject. It is one of the top careers in the world – and we are actually getting rid of it (P<sub>2</sub>D<sub>24</sub>)*.

The research participants at the historically advantaged schools both implied that their principals are supportive regarding the appointment of qualified teachers to teach Accounting. For example, both of them mentioned that their FET Accounting teachers are all well qualified to teach the subject, as well as their EMS teachers, who can also teach the Accounting aspects of the subject. At Claire’s school even the Business Studies and Economics teachers can assist with teaching the Accounting aspects in Grade 9 EMS when needed.

Abigail, Bryan and Edward (all at the historically disadvantaged schools) stated that their EMS teachers do attend workshops on Accounting offered by the WCED, but they emphasise that these workshops resemble (in Abigail’s words) a *crash course* in Accounting. She refers to the EMS teachers who attended such workshops as *four-day EMS teachers*. Astonishingly, she mentioned that *This is a crash course the Department offers and anybody can attend. After four days you are allowed to teach EMS and because they are not confident with Accounting they ignore most of it in Grade 9 (P<sub>2</sub>A<sub>33-35</sub>)*.

It is clear from the situation regarding the EMS teachers who are not properly qualified to teach the Accounting aspects of the subject that the principals at the historically disadvantaged schools do not support the subject of Accounting to the same extent as in historically advantaged schools. The following statement indicates how little Accounting is valued at Edward’s school: *The leader of the school is more concerned about other subjects, so that is why the school management team first caters for the other subjects. They want to remove it [Accounting] from our subject choices (P<sub>2</sub>E<sub>18-19</sub>)*.

Bantwini's (2017) study found that the quality of teaching and learning is influenced by effective leadership and management. It is, therefore imperative that principals give their support to teachers and help them to address the various challenges and concerns around some subjects.

The findings reflected that the Departmental officials are more supportive at the historically advantaged schools than at the historically disadvantaged schools, with the exception of Bryan's school. He stated that *our curriculum advisors are on standby; if you need assistance they will help you*. Claire, for example, mentioned that *the support that you get from your Curriculum Advisor, the amount of work that they put into schools is amazing*. Abigail pointed out that *The WCED ... does not even know what goes on in our school nor do they know anything about the classroom practice, you hardly see them in the year. The only time you see them is during cluster meetings and at the end of the year when you must submit your marks. Other than that they are missing*.

Again, the findings are clear that at the historically advantaged schools the training offered on the new curriculum (the CAPS) was adequate, whereas the training offered at the historically disadvantaged schools was inadequate. Both Claire and Deidre affirmed that the training offered by the WCED on the new CAPS was adequate. Claire asserted that, for Accounting, the training was *definitely focused*. Deidre affirmed that the training was *worthwhile – really enlightening in a sense – valuable*. On the other hand, Abigail, Bryan and Edward respectively declared that the training was *boring ... and tiring; never adequate... crash course; in fact, it isn't training because it is a one-day workshop ... from 09:00 until 13:00*.

Bantwini and Moorosi conducted a study in 2017 on the role of education district support to schools in which they interviewed principals in South Africa. Their findings revealed that many principals were dissatisfied with the low levels of support they received from their district officers. Bantwini and Moorosi (2017) argued for better co-operation between schools and district officers. In my view,

this lack of support from district officers at the historically disadvantaged schools is because their principals do not ensure a collaborative relationship between the school and the district officers, whereas the support from district officers at the historically advantaged schools is the result of their principals ensuring effective collaboration between the school and the district officers, which contributes towards creating a successful school.

Schreuder (2014) suggests that “Teachers should take responsibility for their own professional growth and development instead of making it the responsibility of another party such as the principal or the subject advisor” (p. 202). Bantwini (2015) on the other hand, suggests that effective collaboration should be introduced between district officials and teachers in order to support schools, more specifically to improve student learning and performance (p. 11).

The study showed that the historically advantaged school can provide their teachers with more teaching and learning resources than the historically disadvantaged schools are able to. Although Claire’s and Deidre’s schools have data projectors, whiteboards and even television sets for every teacher, neither of these participants makes optimal use of the available technology. Bryan states their school does not have a data projector for every teacher. He has access to a data projector, but he prefers *to talk*. Abigail and Deidre mainly use the data projector to display templates (for example, the Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Journals). Edward mentioned that he uses the *whiteboard and the data projector ... and is using the technology and the internet more and more in class*, but does not expand on this. Not one of them mentioned that they use the internet in class to demonstrate how companies record their transactions or how various formulae could be used in an Excel spreadsheet to determine the financial result (difference between income and expenses) in an Income Statement or the financial position (total assets, liabilities and owner’s equity) in a Balance Sheet.

Illich (1996) points out that in modern society we live in a technological milieu daily confronted by the irresistible sway of high-tech environments. This

technological milieu is constantly growing and developing new ways of doing things, in the process shaping us and habituating us as if to prescribe how we should live. Therefore teachers should always be asking what is it that technology is saying and doing to us in order to orient themselves to the lived world of learners and the demands of modern society. All the teachers in this study not only have access to technology such as computers and whiteboards, but also to what these objects can do to the lived world of Accounting. It appears as if they fail to see the beautiful images and colour that web browsers can add to their lessons and rather return to the traditional classroom setting of chalk and talk. This has serious implications for teacher training and professional development. Prospective teachers must be taught to see their work as Accounting teachers in the light of the technological horizon of possibilities in which software programmes, slide shows and animations form the basis of their lessons. Instead of writing on the traditional chalkboard in a traditional setting, the modern day teacher is expected to teach using their finger tips on a bright rectangular window, on a white surface framed by and containing explicit text: ‘Format’, ‘Font’, ‘Template’, etc. It is a world of surface and interface that a teacher touches and negotiates, which at times can now take place at great distances away from the four corners of the classroom.

The findings also revealed that all of the research participants teach according to the way in which they were taught at school and as pre-service teachers. For example, Abigail’s Accounting teacher at school and her lecturers at the technikon *drilled* them. She still uses the same strategy where she insists that her learners should memorise certain concepts. Throughout Bryan’s experience with Accounting (at high school and university) he had to learn on his own, and so he has adopted this same strategy with his learners. The following statement corroborates this: *I want you to go home, read the activity, and attempt to do the answer* (for full details see P<sub>2</sub>B<sub>15-17</sub>). Claire also had to learn on her own while at school and at university. The following statement confirms this: *This is the information, this is the exercise. You do it, we mark it. It’s as simple as that*. She expects her learners to do the same. She follows a teacher-centred approach of

teaching towards the test – similar to what she experienced at school and at university. She also encourages her learners to *learn by repetition ... there's a lot of question papers available for them ... on the internet* (P<sub>2</sub>C<sub>67-69</sub>). Deidre's teaching strategy cannot be compared with how she was taught Accounting at high school, because she did not do the subject at high school. She explained that her lecturers at university were *very encouraging, and supportive*. She therefore also uses a more interactive approach, but is also very focused on giving tests. She tests her learners more than what is expected according to the curriculum requirements. The following statement indicates this: *I normally give them a short class test at the end of a chapter*. Edward mentioned that his high school Accounting teacher used an interactive approach. He said that *I still use the same practice because it worked for me and I believe it will work for other learners as well*.

Once again, Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'conditions of existence' play a significant role regarding the way that the participants teach today. Clearly, the way the research participants were taught as children and young adults shaped their way of teaching today.

## 6.5 Experiences of the curriculum

The findings revealed that most of the research participants prefer the old curriculum, that is, the NATED Report 550. Abigail declared that *the old curriculum was much easier to work with as it was more focused and well-structured*. According to Deidre, *the old curriculum worked well for me ... learners were more focused ... they had structure*. Edward affirmed that *the old curriculum was the best ... it was easier to teach the content compared to today*.

Most of the teachers experienced the new curriculum (the CAPS) or parts of it in a negative way. For example, Abigail said that *now you must teach the child about the world with all these different skills in mind ... every day I can see they [learners] can't cope with all the work*. Bryan mentioned that *there are slight*



*changes in terms of [new] topics ... but they don't deviate from the standard things that we do in Accounting.* He has one major concern, namely *the quality of the textbooks that they have now, they don't measure up to the ones that we had that time ... there used to be a variety of textbooks, now you tend to find just one or two examples.* According to Deidre, *In Accounting the principles stay the same ... I never actually take note of any of the new jargon that we use nowadays ... whether they change the syllabus, I still know the principles are the same.* Edward claimed that *The standard of the content is too high for the learners.* Regarding a specific section of the curriculum all of the teachers agreed that learners have problems with analysing and interpreting financial statements.

All of the teachers were taught under the old curriculum (NATED Report 550) at school as well as at the institution of higher learning where they did their initial teacher education. Many of them are reluctant to change their way of teaching, because they are confined in the way they used to teach. They do not know how to include the lived experience of learners and how to address the demands of industry, which require different types of skills compared to years ago. In his doctoral study Koopman (2013) also reports similar findings in which teachers prefer to work with the NATED Report 550.

The findings of this study affirm Aoki's view that it is not only the prescribed curriculum (that is, curriculum-as-planned) that has to be legitimated, but also the curriculum-as-lived by both teachers and learners. The reason is that many social constructivists and phenomenologists over the years through a proliferation of published works have illustrated that knowledge is: (i) not a passive commodity that flows from the minds of teachers to that of their learners; (ii) learners should not be forced to memorise facts and information; and (iii) all knowledge as illustrated by Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' is a product of 'embodied knowledge'. Aoki's work highlighted that 'curriculum-as-lived' is not only lived through the minds of the teachers but also through their bodies. By using Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' this study provides fresh insight into how teachers inhabit the school environment in which they find themselves. Through

the ‘lived body theory’ this study has revealed that “we are our bodies” (Lilja, 2013, p. 2) – we do indeed act in the world by moving around, moving objects around in search of meaning, by observing different objects, and by directing the flow of information through action.

#### **6.6 How do the Accounting teachers’ convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are influence the way in which they experience their work and what motivates them to do what they do**

The findings of this study showed that all of the research participants still believe that they are in the right profession despite all the challenges and concerns, for example, the lack of support of some of the WCED district offices regarding training for the new curriculum or the supply of text books, the lack of support of some of the principals, the indifferent attitude of the learners towards their schoolwork, and the lack of resources in many of the schools. The research participants offered various reasons for still being in the teaching profession: Abigail convincingly stated: *I have a passion for this subject. If I can have my choices over, I would choose this again. I feel ... fulfilled. I absolutely enjoy teaching this subject. I do not want to do anything else.* Bryan emphatically stated *that there is not a day that I come to school and say ... I don’t want to be here. I enjoy my subject. I love Accounting.* Claire mentioned that *every morning when I open my classroom door, there is that smell, and I can’t explain to anybody, but it is that classroom smell that this is where I must be ... and until the Lord really shows me I must be somewhere else, this is where I will be.* Deidre proclaimed: *The older you become the more you enjoy it and you actually want to be there for the children. I will definitely never leave teaching. I want to teach them to be aware of things – to prepare them for life in general.* Edward declared: *I enjoy being a teacher. I want to be at work every day. I enjoy being with my colleagues. I enjoy teaching Accounting.*

Grace De Laguna, an American philosopher who lived in the late 1800s to late 1900s, wrote that “only man, living in the world of values can enjoy and suffer

freedom. It is only between values that choice is possible, and through the acts of choice the potential values of the human world are partially realised” (in Langan, 1966, n.p.). This links with Hannah Arendt’s (1993) point about the craftsman who experiences frustration and anxiety during the crafting of a product, but in the end enjoys his/her work, or is satisfied with the end product. In the light of Arendt’s (1993) comment, the research participants ultimately also enjoy the satisfaction of their work – creative in its own way – amidst experiencing frustration and concerns about their learners and around the subject of Accounting.

## **6.7 Theoretical and practical contribution of this study**

### **6.7.1 Theoretical contribution of this study**

As I engaged with the literature I found that many doctoral studies and published works draw on Husserl’s ‘lifeworld theory’ and/or Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein*, to explain unconscious complexities and entangled ideas of what goes on in the minds of teachers. In addition to the works of these phenomenological stalwarts this study was an attempt to give deeper meaning to lived space by drawing on the scholarly work of Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/1962) ‘lived body theory’. From this perspective the findings have shown the impact of space on the body and how the body becomes socialised into a dominant practice. Therefore the main theoretical contribution was linking Accounting Education with the work of all three phenomenological scholars to give deeper meaning to voices of the teachers.

Husserlian phenomenology provided the epistemological foundations of the mental content inside the minds of the teachers. In other words, the focus was on the essential structures of the teachers’ consciousness which represents the various ideas and images, also referred to as the ‘things in themselves’, whether real or unreal. As I reflected on the teachers’ transcripts, Husserlian phenomenology presented the ‘is-ness’ of their experiences which in turn provided insight into how they feel, their attitudes toward the subject, learners, and the curriculum as

well as the mental computations associated with these aspects. These mental computations allowed me to process the statements of each participant which in turn provided me with insight into the ‘of-ness’ and ‘about-ness’ of what they fear, hate, desire and perceive in their role as teachers. Here the focus was on the teachers’ consciousness as a state of awareness directed toward some overwhelming phenomenon.

While Husserl’s ‘things in themselves’ formed the basis of the teachers’ consciousness, Heideggerian phenomenology as a discourse helped me to understand the teachers’ mind and the conflict that exists between the old and new ways of teaching that they find very difficult to bridge or overcome. The findings have revealed how difficult it is for the teachers to break through the boundaries and limits that Fundamental Pedagogics (FP), which they have experienced for most of their academic lives as learners and students, has imposed on their thinking. Koopman (2018) describes the teachers’ past experiences with FP as a stranglehold that imprisoned their thoughts, producing a struggle for them to transform their practices (p. 64). Furthermore, the findings show that the teachers in this study want their learners to perform well in the subject. Heidegger’s work sheds light on why the teachers restrict their teaching to rote learning by drawing attention to the fact that the teacher’s focus is on preparing learners adequately for tests and examinations.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty developed both Husserl’s and Heidegger’s phenomenology further. His aim is to understand the individual’s perceptual world and the multi-faceted existence of being. In contrast to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty proposes that an individual experiences objects (phenomena) not only through the mind, but also through the body and the world. Merleau-Ponty therefore disagrees with Husserl that consciousness can exist without experience. He proclaims that as we influence the world around us the world also influences us. He therefore implies that we cannot step out of the lifeworld because we are to-the-world. His phenomenology expands on Husserl’s and Heidegger’s phenomenology and by so doing allowed me to provide a succinct narrative of

how intelligent and valuable lived space is in understanding the world of Accounting teaching.

This study used both Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's work to explicate the data from an ontological standpoint. Heidegger believes that "one becomes authentic ... only by *standing out from* others" (Rabil, 1967, p. 41). In other words, Heidegger's *Dasein* is not "being with" others but "being against" others (*ibid.*). In the final analysis, Heidegger's world is not a social world but an authentic subjective world that focuses on explaining transparent coping in time and place. Merleau-Ponty's work allowed me to focus on the social world and its influence on the teacher. For him a person's experiences over time shapes him or her and therefore the actions of the person can be predicted. This study has shown that it is through the body that the teacher comes into contact with the world and gets to know the world (for full details see Chapter Two, section 2.2.3 and Chapter 5.4). According to Le Grange (2004, p. 387) Western philosophy privileges the consciousness and not that of the body and this is exactly what Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' brings to this study, namely, 'embodiment' or 'embodied knowledge'. He implies that learning is not an intellectually constructed activity, but an 'embodied' engagement influenced by the 'conditions of existence' or 'enabling conditions'.

Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' helped me to examine the data for being-to-the-world of each research participant. It allowed me to focus on the research participants' essential connectedness to the history of the school environment in which they teach and their openness to transcend the history that shapes their dominant behaviour.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that our perception (our world) is continually changing and that we are continually updating our perceptions. In other words, our perceptual world changes based on our experience, and consequently the world looks different to us the more we learn about it. Our perceptual world (how we see the world) is never determinate – it is always in the process of getting

determinate, but never completely determinate. It is therefore the job of the phenomenologist to describe our changing world. According to Merleau-Ponty the past is always with us which implies that our past dwells within our phenomenal field. Primarily this means that our thinking is shaped by our embodied experiences. An individual is always trying to get a better grip on reality, as a form of coping, via the ‘intentional arc’. The ‘intentional arc’ refers to the significant experiences that a person embodies that re-arranges the information a person holds about the world. What gets re-arranged in consciousness is the way that the person looks at the world. The ‘intentional arc’ then feeds into a seeking for a ‘maximum grip’ on the world, that is, what is significant for the individual.

As pointed out in Chapter 2 William Pinar made several contributions to the field of curriculum studies (for full details see Chapter Two, section 2.3.2). Three of Pinar’s conceptual contributions proved to be relevant to this study, namely, the concept of *currere* (to run), understanding curriculum, and place [for full details see Chapter Two, section 2.3.2 (a) 2.3.2 and (b)]. Ted Aoki (who was introduced to phenomenology by his doctoral student, Max van Manen) distinguishes between curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived (for full details see Chapter Two, section 2.3.3). Both Pinar and Aoki’s work focus mainly on the scholarly work of Husserl and Heidegger which is to understand the teacher as a subjective epistemological being. By drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s ‘lived body theory’ this study extended their work by linking both the teacher’s life journey (as a being) and *currere* to ‘embodied knowledge’ or what I want to refer to as ‘body knowledge’. The findings have shown how the teachers’ whole body is fully submerged in the world of teaching. On the continuum of time (their whole life’s journey) their bodies draw together all experiences to form habitual perspectives that are for them ways of acting and being in the world. In other words, their bodily experiences are more than just psychological circumstances that formulate their perception about Accounting or the curriculum, but should be viewed as intelligible, intuitive and creative. Pinar’s and Aoki’s work do not succeed in explicating the impact of the social world at the theoretical level that

Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' does. Pinar and Aoki focus more on how teachers react within the world. They do not investigate how the world influences the teachers. In other words, they do not explain how the teachers become the space in which they dwell.

#### 6.7.2 Practical contributions of this study

This study has shown that the mind (psychic), the body (physiological) and the school (physical) all work together in unison as the three orders of reality. Moreover, the findings have also shown that history is deeply embedded in our consciousness, thus our actions are influenced by our past. Some people (in this case, teachers) grapple with deep psychological issues that mostly stem from their past. Therefore those who work with teachers such as teacher educators, policy makers, and education officials should pay careful attention to the insights that this study provides.

The findings have revealed that as teacher educators we should make our pre-service students (in this case, Accounting pre-service teachers) aware that:

- the context (environment) within which they will teach will affect their minds and bodies and eventually it will affect the way they implement the curriculum, their relationships with their learners, colleagues, and principal;
- their understanding of the curriculum will influence how they implement it;
- their own convictions (passion, confidence, certainty, belief) about who they are will affect the way they teach - the assurance that they are fulfilling their purpose (doing what they truly believe they are meant to be doing in life) will have an effect on their attitude towards their work;
- their motivation to teach a subject (in this case, Accounting) will affect their approach to their work and the teaching profession as a whole;

- they should not only focus on transmitting facts and rigid ideas to their learners but they should relate the content to the lived world of their learners; and
- they will be doing the students and the country a great injustice if they are not equipped to teach a subject, for example, if they teach EMS and they have not been trained adequately to teach the Accounting aspects thereof.

This study suggests that when policy makers design a new curriculum they have to take into consideration the following aspects, namely, (i) the circumstances (context) of the school and its impact on the world of teaching; and (ii) the lived experience of teachers and how it could influence their understanding of the curriculum - the teachers' understanding of the curriculum will in turn influence their approach to implementing the curriculum.

This research has revealed that when education officials train teachers in a new curriculum, they should be aware of: (i) the needs of the teachers regarding what they (education officials) need to concentrate on during the training; (ii) the time of day that training takes place and the length of the training sessions; and (iii) the financial capacity of the different schools and its possible effects on learner performance.

## **6.8 Suggestions for future research**

### **6.8.1 A growing need for phenomenological research in education**

This study has revealed that childhood and early adulthood experiences of these research participants as well as the environment within which they teach affect the way they think about their own practices as teachers and also influence their experiences of the Accounting curriculum. Therefore, investigating the lived experiences of other Accounting teachers in the rest of South Africa could examine the teachers' practices and provide further insights into how and why teachers implement the curriculum the way they do. The upshot of this could be potentially transformative policy and teacher education practices.



As I mentioned in Chapter Two (section 2.3.3), although most quantitative approaches provide insight into the behaviour, roles and activities of teachers, they ignore the very concrete world of the lived experiences of teachers (and learners) from their own point of view. This study linked the subjective experiences of the research participants over a continuum of time – from childhood to adulthood - with how they engage with the Accounting curriculum the way they do, because greater focus was placed on the wholeness of the being as opposed to only the epistemological dimension. Phenomenological research does not only enlighten us about each teacher's uniqueness and particular needs, but it also provides a method of how we (as researchers) can position ourselves to address these needs. In other words, it is an attempt to help us “see the sky in its entirety” (Pinar and Reynolds, 2015, p. 2), and not only to concentrate on certain aspects of teachers' work – phenomenology helps us to understand teachers as a whole by investigating their lived experiences and as a result, understand their perceptual world.

This study captured the voices of only five Accounting teachers in the Western Cape. I would therefore urge that more research be conducted on the lived experience of other Accounting teachers in the rest of the country. Another possible study could be to do a comparative study between lived experience of Accounting teachers in the Western Cape and Accounting teachers in a different province in South Africa.

#### 6.8.2 Experiencing the circumstances (contexts) in which Accounting teachers teach

By rephrasing Merleau-Ponty, Norlyk, Martinsen, and Dahlberg assert that “Lived space can go unnoticed but at the same time can influence the experience of well-being” (2013, p. 1); consequently, the circumstances within which all of these research participants teach affect them in one way or another, as I have summarised above: the attitude of the learners, the lack of support of the principals and WCED officials, the lack of resources, the poorly prepared EMS

Grade 9 learners – these all affect the well-being of these teachers. It would be interesting to conduct research on each of these aspects separately to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of each aspect on the teacher's well-being.

#### 6.8.3 Teachers' experience regarding the implementation of the CAPS for Accounting

This study did not concentrate specifically on the implementation of a new curriculum (in this case the CAPS), but instead it explored the lived experiences (lifeworld) of Accounting teachers. It would be interesting to conduct a study which focuses exclusively on Accounting teachers' experience in implementing a new curriculum. The data gathered in such a study could produce more specific information and have a greater impact on our understanding of why Accounting teachers implement the curriculum the way they do.

#### 6.8.4 What motivates Accounting teachers to do what they do?

Although all the teachers reported on so many negatives, they believe that they are still in the right profession. Perhaps more research could be conducted on what exactly inspires Accounting teachers to remain in the teaching profession, despite all the challenges and concerns around the teaching of Accounting.

#### 6.8.5 Researching the lived experience of learners doing Accounting in the FET Band

The study showed that many learners are lackadaisical and seem to lack commitment to the subject or their schoolwork in general. The findings of this study also revealed that many learners are not motivated to do the analysis and interpretation sections of the curriculum – mainly because they find it difficult. A study researching the lived experience of FET Accounting learners might be interesting as an attempt to understand how they experience the subject.

#### 6.8.6 Researching the actions of teachers in the classroom

This study delved into the consciousness of five Accounting teachers. I wanted to explore their inner landscapes and not observe the technical aspects around teaching. In other words, I wanted to understand *why* they teach the way they do and not *how* they teach. I therefore stayed true to Husserl's endorsement of employing interviews and field notes as research instruments (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.2 for a detailed discussion for only using interviews and field notes in this study).

Some authors have used other methods of constructing data, for example, Lilja (2013) used observations to investigate the influences of body, space and time on trustful relationships in the classroom because this method suited her research question. It would be interesting to conduct a study in which the researcher observes Accounting teachers physically teaching in the classroom. Examples that could be investigated are: (i) how do Accounting teachers integrate technology into their classroom practices? and (ii) how do Accounting teachers frame their lessons within the learners' realities?

#### 6.8.7 Investigating the concept of decolonisation

In this study the aspect of colonisation of the mind surfaced in the data explication of one of the participants [see Chapter Five, section 5.5.1 (d)]. In a phenomenological study the overall lived experience of research participants is discussed, therefore it is not always possible to zoom into a particular aspect. Based on the history of South Africa and the current debate on the topic of decolonisation, I would suggest that this could be another aspect to explore in further research. One could investigate the decolonisation of the mind of teachers in South Africa.

## 6.9 Personal reflections as a phenomenological researcher

A thorough engagement with the literature reveals that, to my knowledge, this is the first study that investigates the subjective lived experiences of South African Accounting teachers. It is therefore important to reflect on my journey in order to inform and encourage further postgraduate phenomenological research. The first part of this reflective narrative explains why I decided to research the lived experiences of Accounting teachers, followed by my initial struggle to engage with the difficult and abstract nature of phenomenological texts. Lastly, I reflect on the methodological structure that guides the researcher when engaging with phenomenology.

I was first introduced to phenomenology when I was asked to be a critical reader of a doctoral dissertation four years ago in 2013. Although I struggled to work through the complex and abstract jargon of the study, I was touched and inspired by the depth and rigour with which the author captured and articulated in a very accurate way (in my view) the lived experiences of others. Before reading the dissertation I had always believed that the past ‘was’ and ‘ceased to be’ as we journey through the world. Moreover, I firmly believed that being was all about being present. Nevertheless, I learned that the past, although apparently inactive, impassive and useless ‘is’ and not ‘was’ since it forms a major part of the ‘being-itself’ preserved in itself. In essence, what I learned was that in each and every moment on this human journey our past experiences are ‘eternally’ or for ‘all time’ engrained in our subconscious. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), our past is always present or it is part of our perceptual field. When we need to make decisions our past is there – ready to inform or guide us. Reading that dissertation opened my eyes to a new world that I never knew existed and as I was reading more and more each day I found myself buried in reading phenomenological text and studies. Therefore when I decided to engage with my doctoral work, I knew exactly *what* I was going to do and *how* I was going to do it, that is, which theory, method, and approach to data explication I would use.

Initially, I was only going to focus on Husserl's (1970) 'lifeworld theory' and Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein*. But I felt that if I wanted to give more meaning and depth to each of my research participants I needed another framework. This search led me to Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*, which I found extremely difficult to grasp. To get a better or clearer understanding of Merleau-Ponty's work, I read Rabil's (1967) study entitled *Merleau-Ponty – Existentialist of the Social World*, which was based on his doctoral work on Merleau-Ponty. As I was reading Rabil's book I started to get glimpses into the abstract thoughts of Merleau-Ponty. From Rabil I learned to better understand how Merleau-Ponty's ideas, although connected in some sense, are different from those of Husserl and Heidegger. More importantly, I learned to better understand the significance of the body and its significance in the world as well as the meaning of space, which I no longer view as physical or geometrical, but as perceptive space and providing orientation to the subject who perceives it (Rabil, 1967, p. 33).

I also read innumerable publications by other researchers on the work of Merleau-Ponty for better insight before I engaged with his *Phenomenology of Perception*. All these readings on Merleau-Ponty guided me to greater understanding of his work. Through the work of Merleau-Ponty, I developed the idea of an 'anticipatory interpretive narrative' in which I could give more depth and rigor to my account of the 'conditions of existence' that shaped the teachers' lived world, and how it relates to the 'intentional arc' that triggers and influences human action and behaviour as people attempt to find the best way to respond to events as a way of coping or getting a 'maximum grip' on reality. Therefore, connecting Husserl's 'lifeworld theory' (descriptive narrative) and Heidegger's *Dasein* (interpretive narrative) with Merleau-Ponty's 'lived body theory' (anticipatory interpretive narrative) helped me to shed light on the life histories of the participants, shaped by the context in which they work in order to explain behaviour based on the body's orientation in time and space. Remaining true to these paradigms was probably the most challenging part, apart from the writing of

the thesis itself, but before I reflect on the data explication I first want to share my experiences of how I found my methodological way.

In Chapter Three I described the unique features of phenomenology as a research methodology. One of the most difficult tasks of ‘doing’ phenomenology is the fact that neither Husserl (1970, 1983), Heidegger (1927/1967, 2002), nor Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) provided a specific method, outlining step-by-step how researchers should go about the process methodically. Both Devenish (2002) and Koopman (2013) highlight this point in their first engagement with phenomenology as a method and explain how they struggled and had to find their feet in the field. Both authors pointed out that phenomenology entails ‘doing’ and not ‘knowing’. Similar to these authors I experienced the same difficulty as there was no recipe to follow. It was Seidman’s (2013) book, *Interviewing as qualitative research*, on the phenomenological interview and conduct of the researcher in the field that assisted me to remain within the phenomenological circle. From all these aspects such as crafting the interview schedule, personal engagement with the participants in the interview process, the most challenging part was to ‘bracket’ myself during the interview process. Giorgi (1994) explains ‘bracketing’ as follows:

the researcher brackets or disengages from all past theories or knowledge about the phenomenon, and withholds existential assent of the phenomenon (p. 206)

Similar to Van der Mescht (1997), however, I could not pretend that I did not know anything about the topic under investigation. Therefore, I had to restrain myself from commenting as far as possible in order to hear the voices of the Accounting teachers, as Aoki so pertinently puts it:

Let us beckon these voices to speak to us, particularly the silent ones, so that we may awaken to the truer sense of teaching that likely stirs within each of us (in Pinar & Reynolds, 2015, p. 17-18).

In the light of the above quotation, Van Manen (1990) avers that a phenomenological methodology posits an approach towards research that aims to be presuppositionless. This refers to the fact that those who attempt to engage in phenomenological research must ward off any tendency towards constructing a predetermined set of rules that govern procedures and techniques given their research objectives. This brings me to the data explicitation process.

The framework for the data explicitation process as discussed above was divided into three different components, namely: (i) the descriptive narrative, drawing on Husserlian phenomenology; (ii) the interpretive narrative, drawing on Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein*; and (iii) the anticipatory interpretive narrative, drawing on Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'lived body theory'. While writing the Husserlian descriptive narratives I had to guard against interpreting the data. I had to constantly remind myself to go 'back to the things themselves', or as Giorgi (1994) puts it:

The phenomena to be studied have to be described precisely as they present themselves, neither adding to nor subtracting from what is given (p. 206).

I had to concentrate only on presenting the 'things in themselves' in the Husserlian descriptive narratives and not to interpret the data. As Van der Mescht cautions, "the temptation to interpret, to analyse ... is overwhelmingly strong" (1997, p. 184). However, as I progressed from one participant to the next it became much easier.

I was shocked at the information that emerged in the Heideggerian interpretation of each research participant. Heidegger's (1927/1967) notion of *Dasein* allowed me to delve much deeper than the Husserlian descriptive narrative, hence astonishing information emerged in this narrative. I have learned not to simply listen to what people say, but also to what they are not saying. There were certain aspects I was reluctant to mention, for example, Claire's upbringing in a completely 'white' setting and culture. How the fact that she enrolled for the military tells one more about who she is and how this could influence her

teaching, that is, actions and behaviour in the classroom. Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) 'lived body' theory proved to be effective in drawing on the research participants' past, that is, by examining their 'conditions of existence' or their 'enabling conditions', to predict future behaviour. Before embarking on this study, I did not realise that there is actually a theory which enables one to predict behaviour. I simply thought it was based on common sense. I have learned to pay 'primary attention' to certain phenomena that require careful/detailed attention, so that what was in the background can be brought to the foreground, or as Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) puts it, can stand out 'as figure'. In writing the anticipatory interpretive narrative, I also learned that there is no rational structure to our experience – it is just the way our experiences organise themselves – we simply move from the 'indeterminate' to the 'determinate' as our perceptual world changes (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). As we strive to get a 'maximum grip' (better grip) on what is important to us, our perceptual world changes (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962).

By using the three explication frameworks, I therefore found phenomenology as a methodology valuable for this study. Instead of simply focusing on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, and Heidegger's existential phenomenology, I added Merleau-Ponty's transcendental existential phenomenology. Similar to Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) I wanted to describe the world of the research participants from within their own lived worlds. In so doing, I discovered the phrase 'embodied knowledge' which I can now use in my own practice.

## 6.10 Summary

Max van Manen (1990) argues compellingly in *Researching lived experience* that more research methods are required that will give greater expression to the liveliness, the involvement and even the passions of the experiences of those being researched. He believed that meaning is deeply interwoven in and with experiences. To van Manen, phenomenology as a method does not only lead us to new understandings of our fellow-beings, but for us as researchers (as in this



study) it also confronts us with our own profile of reality, which we regard as universally valid. This holds true, Willis (2002) argues, because the mind does not only grasp an object to analyse and subdue it, but it also ‘attempts to hold it in consciousness, to allow its reality and texture to become etched on the mind’ (p. 3). With these words he implicitly and unintentionally expressed the impact that phenomenology has on who we are. What this study has shown is that when researching the lived experiences of Accounting teachers (or those in any other subject area), we need to re-evaluate our own perceptions of their (the teachers’) lived world and find new ways to re-think how we relate to them.

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### Approved with Stipulations New Application

29-Mar-2016  
Koopman, Karen KJ

Proposal #: SU-HSD-001967

Title: A phenomenological investigation of the lived experience of selected Accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province.

Dear Mrs Karin Koopman,

Your New Application received on 09-Mar-2016, was reviewed.  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 29-Mar-2016 -28-Mar-2017

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:

#### 1) PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

1.1) The choice of population is justifiable and the recruitment method is discussed in sufficient detail in the proposal. However, according to the scope of the study 8 participants will be interviewed (supposedly one teacher per school), but nine schools are identified as being involved in the study? The discrepancy between the number of participants (either 8 or 9) should be clarified in a short note to the REC.

1.2) The DESC made the following comment in the DESC report: "Also, could it be argued that these teachers are representative of all accounting teachers in the Western Cape as the title implies?"

In light of the comment made by the DESC regarding the representativity of the 8 participants, this is something that the applicant may consider to broaden the impact and applicability of the results of the study. However, the fact that the title reads "selected Accounting teachers" does allow for a small number of participants that not necessarily constitute a representative sample of all teachers in the province.

#### 2) PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF PARTICIPANTS

In the same note to the REC, please state whether the transcriber will be the researcher herself or a different person. If the latter, please ensure that the transcriber is informed of the need for confidentiality and acknowledges this in writing. The latter need not be submitted to the REC, but should be kept on file by the researcher.

#### 3) INSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL PERMISSIONS

The permission letter from the WCED expires on 31 March 2016, yet it is indicated that the data collection will start 1 March 2016. Is that viable? The researcher should apply for a renewal of institutional permission from the WCED and submit the updated letter to the REC for record-keeping.

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and approval.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with



Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)

Tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
[wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

**REFERENCE:** 20150921-3523

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Karen Koopman  
50 Koi Street  
Soneike  
Kuils River  
7580

Dear Mrs Karen Koopman

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF  
SELECTED ACCOUNTING TEACHERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 April 2016 till 30 September 2016**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 04 April 2016

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Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)



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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

**TITLE: A phenomenological investigation into the lived experience of selected accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province**

**CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPATION**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Karen Joy Koopman (M.Ed) from the Faculty of Education: Curriculum Studies Dept at Stellenbosch University. The findings of this study will contribute towards a doctoral dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have been teaching accounting in the Further Education and Training Band for about 10 years or more.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study will be to describe the lived experience of South African teachers. Specifically, the study purports to establish how accounting teachers, in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band, are coping with the challenges they face. The findings might help us understand how the world of accounting teachers influences the learner and the teaching and learning environment of Accounting. In order to establish how accounting teachers are coping with simply being accounting teachers, this study aims to explore their inner landscapes – in other words, the study will try to answer the question why do (certain) accounting teachers do what they do. (The word 'certain' is in brackets because the findings cannot be generalized – each person is unique.)

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

Each research participant will be interviewed by the researcher, Karen Koopman. Two interviews of approximately an hour to one and a half hours long will be conducted. Each interview will be conducted at a time, place and date convenient that is convenient for the interviewee. In the first interview the researcher will probe into the background of the interviewee in order to construct a biographical profile of each participant. The nature of the interview will be unstructured. The second interview will investigate the professional experiences of each participant.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, inconveniences for any research participant.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There will not be any financial benefit for the research participants. The only benefit that will result from an interview is that the research participants will have a better understanding of why they do what they do in relation to their work/profession.

The information obtained in this study may be useful for policy-makers, but particularly useful to those involved in initial and in-service teacher education, such as Senior Education Specialist in order to gain an understanding of the experiences of accounting teachers.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will not be any remuneration for participating in this study.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained. Pseudonyms will be used for the names of all research participants as well as the names of the schools at which they are teaching. All interviews will be recorded, labeled and stored on an audio-recorder. Each interview will be coded, for example, participant, date and time of interview (JM1502; 13:00). The data will be kept in a secured area where only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to it. This will be done to protect the identity of the participants.

The data will not be released/made available to any other person except when an examiner of the final dissertation needs to consult it to verify the findings and conclusions. This is strictly for the completion of the degree.

The research participant will have the right to review/edit his/her recording and to read through the transcript in order to verify whether the data has been transcribed correctly. The researcher is the only person who will have access to these recordings and transcripts since they will only be used for educational purposes. The recordings will be erased once the researcher has graduated.

If any research papers will be published from the final dissertation, the researcher will again ensure that the identity of all research participants will be protected by using pseudonyms as well as pseudonyms for the names of the schools at which they teach.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. If the researcher discovers that you do not prescribe to the specific requirements for choosing the participants, your participation in the research may be terminated immediately.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Karen Koopman (at 071 330 1072; 50 Koi Street, Soneike, Kuils River) or my supervisor, Prof Lesley Le Grange (at 021 808 2280; Faculty of Education, on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor).



## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

### SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to [me/the subject/the participant] by [name of relevant person] in [Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**CONFIDENTIALITY FORM – TRANSCRIBER OF INTERVIEWS**

**TITLE:** A phenomenological investigation into the lived experience of selected accounting teachers in the Western Cape Province

**CONFIDENTIALITY FORM FOR TRANSCRIBER OF INTERVIEWS**

Thank you for agreeing to transcribe the interviews for the above study conducted by Karen Joy Koopman (M.Ed) from the Faculty of Education: Curriculum Studies Dept at Stellenbosch University. The findings of this study will contribute towards a doctoral dissertation.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study will be to describe the lived experience of South African teachers. Specifically, the study purports to establish how accounting teachers, in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band, are coping with the challenges they face. The findings might help us understand how the world of accounting teachers influences the learner and the teaching and learning environment of Accounting. In order to establish how accounting teachers are coping with simply being accounting teachers, this study aims to explore their inner landscapes – in other words, the study will try to answer the question why do (certain) accounting teachers do what they do. (The word 'certain' is in brackets because the findings cannot be generalized – each person is unique.)

**2. PROCEDURES**

Each research participant will be interviewed by the researcher, Karen Koopman. Two interviews of approximately an hour to one and a half hours long will be conducted. In the first interview the researcher will probe into the background of the interviewee in order to construct a biographical profile of each participant. The nature of the interview will be unstructured. The second interview will investigate the professional experiences of each participant.

**3. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

As agreed telephonically, payment will be made after all interviews have been transcribed.

**4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The data is not to be released to any person other than the researcher, Karen Koopman. It is vital that confidentiality be maintained. The researcher, in turn, will only use this information for the purpose of her degree or other research articles that might flow from it. To protect the identity of all research participants pseudonyms are to be used in the transcripts.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR/INTERVIEWER

If you have any questions or concerns about the recordings, please feel free to contact the researcher, Karen Koopman at 071 330 1072.

SIGNATURE OF TRANSCRIBER OF INTERVIEWS

M. Betha

Name of Transcriber

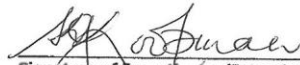


Signature of Transcriber

6-02-2017

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR/INTERVIEWER



Signature of Investigator/Interviewer

05-02-2017

Date

# **A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SELECTED ACCOUNTING TEACHERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **Theme 1: Autobiographical information**

#### ***1.1 Teacher demographic characteristics***

- 1.1.1 Gender:.....
- 1.1.2 Race:.....
- 1.1.3 Age:.....
- 1.1.4 Marital status:.....
- 1.1.5 Qualifications:.....
- 1.1.6 Years of experience:.....

#### ***1.2 Personal background***

- 1.2.1 Tell me about where you grew up – the place, the people/community, period, culture?
- 1.2.2 What were your parents' professions?
- 1.2.3 What were your parents' dream(s) for you? What profession did they want you to follow?
- 1.2.4 Tell me about your own (early) dreams - for your own career/life?

- 1.2.5 What do you remember most about what your parents taught you about work, work ethic, commitment, matching your personality with your work, etc.
- 1.2.6 Did you do Accounting at school? How did you experience the subject? In which way did your teacher influence your own practice?
- 1.2.7 Was teaching your first choice of occupation? If not, have you worked in a different profession before entering the teaching profession? Tell me about that – when, what did you do and for how long? Why did you leave?
- 1.2.8 What motivated you to study teaching?

### **1.3 *Teacher qualification(s)***

- 1.3.1 When did you enrol for your teaching qualification?
- 1.3.2 When did you complete your teaching qualification?
- 1.3.3 Where did you train as a teacher? Why did you decide to study at this institution?
- 1.3.4 What were your major subjects? Why did you choose to major in these subjects?
- 1.3.5 How did you experience your teacher training? For example, how did the curriculum that you followed at university/technikon relate to the practical nature of the subject in the ‘real world’? And: In relation to what was covered in the school curriculum how did the curriculum that was covered at university/technikon compare to that which you done at school.

**Theme 2: Teacher's professional context (lived space)**

- 2.1 When you first started to teach, did the school appoint a mentor to guide you? Explain this experience – advantages, disadvantages, how did it help you or not? Explain your experience regarding teacher networks, communications with administrators, etc.
- 2.2 Were you mentored in matters regarding opportunities for advancement? If yes, explain the experience.
- 2.3 Did you study further since you first qualified?
- 2.4 If yes, what is your qualification now? If still busy: What qualification have you enrolled for?
- 2.5 If person studied further/is studying further: How did you/do you find studying part-time with all the work involved in being a teacher? Explain your experience regarding support from your colleagues and/or principal whilst furthering your studies.
- 2.6 What subject(s) did you teach when you started teaching? Which grades were they and for how long did you teach those grades? What were the class sizes of these grades you taught? How did you experience teaching these (other) subjects?
- 2.7 If participant did not start out teaching Accounting: Explain how you landed up teaching Accounting? Which grades have you taught? How did you experience teaching those grades? Which grades are you currently teaching? How do you experience teaching these grades?

[If participant started out teaching Accounting immediately – adjust the above questions accordingly.]

- 2.8 Describe the circumstances/context within which you teach? For example: number of learners enrolled at your school, infra-structure of your school, demographics of learners.
- 2.9 What is the average class size of your current Accounting class(es)? How do you experience the attitude of your Accounting learners towards learning and/or towards the subject? How does this affect your teaching?
- 2.10 Are there sufficient teaching and learning materials at the school? What is the principal (or management)'s approach to sourcing adequate resources/teaching and learning materials. Explain how you experience support with regards to this matter?

### **Theme 3: The teacher and the Accounting curriculum**

- 3.1 When you entered the teaching profession in .....(year).... what was the legislated curriculum at that time? How did you experience teaching that curriculum ?
- 3.2 How did the various changes in the educational landscape over the past decade (or two) impact on your disposition towards the Accounting curriculum?
- 3.3 With the introduction of the new curriculum (CAPS) did you receive any training in Accounting from the Department of Education? How did you experience this training? Did this training take place before, during or after the introduction of the new curriculum? [If training took place during or after the implementation of CAPS, how did you feel when you suddenly had to teach this new curriculum without undergoing any training?]

- 3.4 Did you receive training in both the curriculum aspects (e.g. the *how* to teach) and in the new content/topics. How did the training affect your practice?
- 3.5 How did you experience your principal's attitude towards sending you for training?
- 3.6 How do you experience teaching Accounting according to the new curriculum (CAPS) after undergoing training?
- 3.7 What is your personal philosophy (sentiments/thoughts) on the new curriculum (CAPS) for Accounting? What do you think are the most challenging changes regarding the new curriculum for Accounting? How do you deal/cope with these challenges?
- 3.8 Do you feel that this is (still) the right profession for you? Explain.

# **A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SELECTED ACCOUNTING TEACHERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

### **Research participant: Bryan**

I: Okay, I am doing an interview with Bryan. He is at a school here in Khayelitsha and ... we can start. So you are.... age?

A: I am 47.

I: 47. Marital status?

A: I am married.

I: Qualification?

A: BCom, HDE and I have an ACE course.

I: BCom, HDE and ACE: Accounting?

A: No, it is across the curriculum.

I: Language? Must I say across the curriculum?

A: That was the course description.

I: Okay, years of experience?

A: Twenty.

I: Twenty? And I've got here position at school Deputy Principal.

A: Yes.

I: And number of learners at school?

A: We have 790.

I: 790. Management structure?

A: Principal, two deputies.

I: Two deputies.

A: Four HODs, for each department.

I: Four HODs.

A: Yes.

I: And then all other teachers?



A: 20.

I: 20 teachers besides them?

A: 20 teachers. Okay.

I: Okay, so that is just demographics quickly covered. All right Bryan, I am just going to quickly give you sort of a structure of the interview. I am going to ask you about personal, your personal background where you grew up and so on. And then whatever I didn't ask you here, about teacher qualifications, I will ask here and then about the ... your professional context within which you are working, and then more specifically we get to talk about Accounting curriculum. That is it. Normally it takes about an hour, just over an hour to get through everything.

A: Okay.

I: So can you tell me a little bit about the place in which you grew up? And then also the place, the people, community, what type of people and when was this, the culture of the people?

A: Okay. I grew up, first twelve years of my life, in Belgravia, Athlone. We lived there on a family property. It was a sink house, electricity, but no running water. So we ... our ablution facilities were outside, we had a tap. That was the home of my grandparents. They originally lived there and then they moved away, a house that they build, they moved there, a couple of roads away from where we were living. So, those years we were surrounded by family, because my grandmother and my grandfather's family, they were all living in Belgravia. So we were surrounded by aunts and uncles and cousins. So we lived there until I was twelve and then we moved to Eldorado Park because we moved then into a council house - brick home - and we were fortunate that the house we received, it was on the outskirts of Hanover Park. So it was bordering on a more affluent area. So, we were not really caught up in the wilder side of Hanover Park, because it was an area notorious for gangsters. So we (I) never attended school in Hanover Park, I attended school in Belgravia. Ja, my first school was Alexander Primary school, that school was closed and converted into a secondary school. It was in 1982, if my memory serves me well, no in 1980. And then I was, that time we called it standard 2 (Grade 4). So we then, we had, it was quite a nice school and then we then moved to, because the school closed, we had to go to Heatherdale Primary

School which is in Belgravia as well and then my high school, I attended Belgravia High School - also in Belgravia. So I grew up in Hanover Park, but I was not really caught up in the, you know with the people of Hanover Park, my friends were in Athlone, they were in Greenhaven. So, I didn't really socialize except with a soccer team. I belonged to the local soccer club. I was a member of the soccer club. So I was a member of that club for a while, four years and then I ..

I: Was that high school?

A: Ja that was during my high school years, yes - so I was 16, 17. So from the age of 15, I belonged to the soccer club. So it was just something to keep us busy, but I never really socialized with my team mates - greeted them but I never socialized with them. So that was it. I had an experience where I was robbed in the first week, by someone who reportedly knew my family. He could mention names and so on and then he led me into a trap. He took my money. So that was my first experience in Hanover Park.

I: Did you not want to hit him?

A: No. My mother was very upset, because I came home and was looking so calmly - as if nothing happened and she said, how could you let somebody inside. So I said but he mentioned, he mentioned my brother's name and he mentioned my brother's friends. So - and I - at the time there was a cinema in Hanover Park, but my brothers and I would always go to the cinema in Athlone. So this guy says, no man I want to show you this cinema in Hanover Park. Come I want to show you the back door, we can look through the door and you can see what is playing in the movie. But it wasn't, I wasn't traumatized by the thing. I just gave him money and then he disappeared. So you know that was, I had good friends in the street, a couple of houses away from us. And they were guys that I used to be with every day, but I think as we grew older, we became estranged from one another. So they still live in the area but you know we just started going different paths. Still polite with each other, but we never, we did not socialize at each other's homes. We were friends for many years, but they never came to our house, and we had this soccer field, school field (grounds) where we used to play cricket, soccer, rugby and we spend just almost every afternoon there with them.

So we were very good friends but we never socialized at each other's homes.

I: And your parents? What did they do?

A: My parents were in the catering. Both of them. My father was a very good waiter. He taught me to be a waiter as well. I was quite fortunate, my first job was as a waiter and my father was my mentor. And everything that he taught me, even the value systems, is things that I still carry with me today.

I: So what are those values?

A: Hard work. Workaholic. I always remember, he told me, I remember this quite vividly, he said: always remember that when you are working you are being paid to work. It doesn't matter if you are paid a lot you decided that you want to do the job. So always do the best that you can do. So, he always emphasised to be the best of yourself, you're your employer. That is the one thing that he always taught me and it was something that actually, I think if I hadn't had experience, I would have come into teaching with a totally different mindset. Seriously, the fact that I worked, and I worked quite hard because being a waiter, you know you're constantly busy, serving a 100 people an hour, so you got to be focused, you know. You got to know that you are there, with a purpose to make somebody happy and also there to make sure that the organisation that you are working for, that it is in the positive light. So I worked in the catering industry for 15 years, I started at the age of 16, while I was studying, while I was part-time employed, before I became permanent as a teacher. I was still working as a waiter because I felt that until I am permanently employed I have to keep those doors open. You know, I would always go back during the December holidays and at one stage I didn't have a teaching post, and I was actually offered to train as a manager. I said that I believe that I will become a teacher, so I just had to hold on to that idea, but both my parents were very hard working.

I: Tell me about your mother?

A: My mother was also in the catering.

I: What are the values that she taught you?

A: My mother was a very loyal person. I never worked with my mother but she was a very responsible person and she would often tell us about the people that she worked with. She was a housekeeper as well. So she worked for white

people ... catering, taking care of their home basically, being the housekeeper and I came from a very big family, who've got twelve children. So she basically had to, my mother was married before as well, but she had a very bad relationship, I know it is very personal. But I think it is important - the choice of spouse. So, she divorced but she always kept the children and she took responsibility for her children. She was working, they called it in-service, so she would sleep in and my brothers and sisters basically had to go and live with aunties and uncles and she also saw that she got space - she provided for them. So, she carried groceries, bags and bags of groceries and my sister can attest to it as well. How my mother would come and bring them food and bring food for the family as well. So they were, both my parents were very generous people, and I think that generosity of spirit is what they instilled in me more than anything else. In caring about the family, we live in Belgravia in a sink house, it was ten children, living in the house, and even up to today, you know people always talk about Betsy, her name was Betsy. So, they always speak of Betsy and how her door was always open for the family.

I: They must be dead. They must have passed away now?

A: No. My mother is 82, it will be 83 this year. My father passed away 2005. So it is almost ten years, more than ten years that he passed away. But they always taught us as children to help each other. Sometimes people don't understand - we are a big family so they have multiplication of problems. My older sibling, I am the first one going to university, I was 7<sup>th</sup> in the family, so I was the first one to attend university, my eldest brother he attended, at that time it was still called Cape Tech. And he became qualified as a quantity surveyor. So he was the first one that attended the Technikon but I was the first one in our family that attended university, although I had other siblings. So my other siblings they ... some never completed school, others completed school, so they always ... sometimes struggling and then..

I: Who's the other?

A: My siblings, they are older than me, and some are older from my mother's first marriage.

I: I see.

A: From my mother's first marriage, we were not seen as, you know people would use the term step brother, step sister, we never used that term. It was brothers and sisters. My father never used that term. He would say this is my son, this is my daughter, to his step children. My second eldest brother always says, you know he doesn't call my father "daddy", he said Henry, because that was my father's name. But he had respect, he was respectful for my father. He would always say Henry, he used to say his son, you know and for him it was, it was something special. You know that this man is calling him his son, so my parents they really ... family ... you know my mother she would ... she is like a mother hen around her brothers and sisters. Because even it is like our family, they were also a huge family, they were 14. So my mother is that age and her brother is this age, you know so she is like a mother hen to them. The way she loves them ... you know I think that was evident to everyone to see. When they around, they know they can come to, they used to call it home. And they would come to her, so that was the kind of people that my parents were.

I: Do you think that kind of love for others- whatever caring type spirit - led you to maybe go into teaching?

A: No, not that.

I: Love for children, care for children?

A: No, it was never that, I started off when I went to university, I did a BCom. I majored in Accounting and Economics and my intension was I was going to become a Chartered Accountant. And then in my second year, I started helping my friends and through helping my friends, I actually told them I actually want to become a teacher.

I: A lot of people ...?

A: I just said, I want to become a teacher but then my friends, their parents said, no, it is not the right profession, and I put it on hold. And then I worked as an Accountant Clerk for a retailer in Cape Town for one year. I then worked as a waiter for another two years and then, during those two years, I went and did my HDE. So I became a teacher later in my life.

I: Is that at UWC? The BCom?

A: I did BCom at UCT, and I did my HDE at UWC. And the ACE course I did through Metropolitan University, the old UPE.

I: Okay. There was a question that I wanted to ask you. Your parents did they have dreams perhaps ... for you? For your career or did they just ...”

A: My parents just encouraged us to work hard at school. That is all they did.

I: And from there take it to wherever?

A: And then whatever we wanted to do, they would support us. So I was actually thinking, I look at my daughter, my daughter is a very, she achieves well at school, she is a top learner at school. And I am always encouraging her, but my parents never, like said well-done son. It never bothered me because parents don't do that, you must just work hard and go to school and work hard, because that is what is expected from you, because you are at school.

I: I think it is also, I must focus, because they work hard, they expect you to work hard.

A: As I've said, we never ... at school - I attended Belgravia, it was a good school ... we never received awards from the school. You know they never, they never gave us any recognition but you just had to work hard. So if you want to go somewhere in life, you work hard at school and you are not doing it for anybody else, but yourself. So my parents never encouraged me but they were proud, I think, of me - that I got into university and especially UCT. So you know I think that made them proud. But then they were really ... said: you want to go into that direction - you want to be a doctor, you want to be a teacher - they just said: do well in school. Do well in school and you will get somewhere in life, but they were very supportive in whatever I wanted to do.

I: You said you - and your one brother went to Cape Tech, you went to University. And the others ... did none of them ever go anywhere?

A: No, as soon as they were done with school, they went to work. But the strange thing is you know, the value system is ... of hard work ... is in all of them. You know, my sister, she is a supervisor, my brother became a manager. You know, so that hard work and that value system was in all of us. We knew we had to work hard. Some people were saying we are running away from something. No,

we try to focus on that, so put your energy ... but we were just that way inclined, we just tell them that at the end of the day you need to work hard.

I: And at school, did you do Accounting at school ... high school?

A: I did Accounting, yes. I enjoyed Accounting in high school - that was my favourite subject.

I: Is it? So tell me about that experience and about the teacher?

A: Actually, there are two parts to this whole journey of Accounting. I was a good learner at school, so we were grouped into the A class. The A-class does Maths, Accounting, Physics, Biology back then. So I was in that class back then in 1985 - it was in grade 8, in standard 8, it was grade 10. I was a very shy person. I was very, very shy. So I was in this class with a few friends, but I wasn't, I didn't feel comfortable in this class, but I was doing accounting, but I wasn't good at it. I was performing poorly in Accounting - Grade 10 (standard 8). So I was performing very poorly and then in '85, I never knew anything about politics, until my friends started to speak.

I: And you went to Belgravia?

A: It was at Belgravia, yes. So I then decided okay I am going to be involved because whatever I was fighting for something, something that we should be involved with. So I didn't write any exam that year, end of the year, because we had a choice to write or not to write. And then the following year we had the choice of either staying in standard 8 or going over to standard 9, that was the option that was given, so a lot of my peers, those who were with me in grade 10, they either wrote exam or they went over. And it was only, four, five of us that stayed in that class, that decided to stay in grade 10, standard 8. And then I met the most wonderful classmates ever. I also say they changed my life. I became more confident, felt more comfortable and I got a ... the previous year I had this one accounting teacher, she was a nice lady, I just couldn't understand accounting, and then when I repeated standard 8, I got a new accounting teacher and then my marks just soared. I would get like, that time it was out of 400, I would get 396 out of 400. You know quite high marks you know.

I: What was his style? If you think as a teacher, because you are a teacher and you know the strategies and things, what was it that actually make you understand?

A: I don't know what it is, you know they say something just, you just understand something and that just happened to me. It just all clicked in that particular year. Everything just came together nicely. I don't know maybe ... (disturbance – learners entered the interview room). So I don't know, there was, I think that the teacher did ... I was very independent. I hardly ever asked the teacher questions. So I would basically just sit in class and the teacher will teach and I would understand. I would go home and do my homework, come back the next day and everything is right, and I just kind of remember I had this thing for accounting. So, there was nothing special that the teacher did besides teach. I think it was just maybe my mind was different. Maybe I matured more over that year. The previous year I started working as well, so mixing with different people maybe opened my mind as well. Being comfortable in the class where I was at, I think maybe that also contributed, but for some reason I just kind of shot up, came out of my ... flowered.

I: You kind of just blossomed.

A: Yes, that is the word, I just blossomed. That is the right word. I didn't want to be seen as a flower, but I just blossomed and I think the last three years of my schooling was the best ever. I was at school for many years, but I think the last three years, with that group of friends that I had... I think they just made ... they just changed my life completely.

I: Did this person, but now you said already that you don't really know what it is that made you understand, when he was teaching?

A: She.

I: Oh, it was she.

A: The accounting teachers.

I: Okay, now I am still with this accounting teacher ...

A: I don't know. She never did anything particular.

I: And is there something that you can remember, the way she taught that you perhaps are using now, or is it too long ago?



A: No. I don't, nothing that she, she was, it was the normal talk and chalk. I always remember seeing her standing in front and explaining things to us. But she always used to look at me.

I: Is there anything that you can, you ... perhaps if you look back, is there something that you use that she used?

A: Not really. I always remember that she just stood in front. She was standing in front and would explain. She always used to ask me. She used to look at me, do you understand, because I have this, this frown. People always say I am angry, but it is not, and she used to say, do you understand? And I would say: "yes Miss". Why do you look so confused? I just understood it, so I don't know, I don't know how things fell into place, but I just understood Accounting. It was so easy for me to understand it.

I: The systems?

A: Yes, everything the double entry, the adjustments, everything, I don't know. Maybe it was a divine thing.

I: Okay, this question we asked already about the first choice of occupation. Oh but was it, you said already it wasn't actually, you wanted to become something else. We dealt with that. And then eventually, oh yes, but then you did say, what motivated you then to study teaching – it was the tutoring?

A: Yes, I was helping my friends. I think that more than anything - and after that I would ... school children would come to me, their parents asked me can't you teach my child, can't you help them with Accounting. They responded well to what I was doing - their marks improved. So, I think that also helped me to make my decision to say this is what I wanted to do. I did put it on hold but I earlier on in my second year of university, I would like to become a teacher.

I: Okay. So what year was that when you enrolled for, is it now for the BCom?

A: I enrolled for BCom in 1989 and I did my HDE FET in 1996.

I: There must have been some kind of a gap year.

A: No, I worked as well.

I: So the work that you told me about, so this is '89 to '91?

A: No, no it was 1993.

I: 1993.

A: And then work. And then 1996 I did my HDE.

I: Okay. I've got this. Where did you train ... I got that. Oh why did you go to UCT, and not, like all the other people, go to UWC ... I don't want to say the word.

A: I never applied to UWC. I think one of the reasons was because they were always ... there were always boycotts or strikes. And I always thought, I said to myself, I don't want that interference ... I want to, if I go to study ... I want to finish my studies and that is it. And then I applied to UWC, because I never had a very nice experience at UCT, from a personal point of view. I started off well but then I became friends with people that the relationship started out well, but they kind of degenerated and it impacted on me quite seriously. I think a different person would probably not be it, I think that is the one thing I have is this perseverance. The chips are down, so push them. I had a very ... I never shared that experience with anyone. I had a very hard time at UCT. Socially no 1, because I had friends but you know I sometimes felt more like an outsider with my friends, later on, but what we had at UCT, we had different groups, so you the Jews who sat in the lesson, we had the Muslims who sat on the steps, close to the cafeteria and the you had the Christian or coloured who sat in the, what was it called, that was the, also a cafeteria but there were two sides. But then I would ... those who live in Fairways, those who live in Hanover Park and those who live in Bonteheuwel. So we had a kind of class separation as well. So I was a lot with my friends in the first year, but you know, I was judged a lot by people. I don't know what it was all about, but they always say things about me that wasn't true and I would not respond to it, but then later on it started to bother me. And then I got a different circle of friends and it started out okay, but then one of my friends, she had an emotional attachment to me. Her emotional attachment to me affected my life in other ways because she interfered in the relationship I had. So all these kind of things, you know ... but all those kind of things it gave me a very bad experience at UCT.

I: Is that the main reason?

A: Yes that is the main reason it was. I never discussed it my parents, I never discussed it with my family. I basically kept it inside of me. That is why I say, I

think I am a very strong person. And I managed to persevere through all that adversity and I never told anybody about it - that problem side of myself. It was kind of self (in myself) therapy - by writing things down, my thoughts down, my feelings, those kind of things. And then I went ... when I went to UWC, I think in that one year, I met more people than I had ever at UCT. It was a totally different environment and also maybe because I was more mature as well.

I: And tell me about the experience as the teacher training in that HDE?

A: It was ...?

I: I know - I am sure Prof Smit.

A: Yes, Juliana Smith, she was my mentor and I was the older one, they were 21, 22 and I was here 26 already. So there was that gap. So I was very serious about it. But they were there, okay they are going to do it, and they are going to pass, you know. But the one thing I know, I used to question a lot. So that was before when I was doing my undergraduate, you know you are sitting frantically, you are writing, whatever the lecturer was saying, you are writing it down and not questioning anything, but when I got to do my HDE, I think maybe because my mind is more open, and I was more mature, maybe perhaps more confidence as a person. Then we would have discussions or the lecturer would say something, I would then say, I don't agree. The lecturers sometimes didn't like it, I was also ... I didn't understand what the lecturer was maybe saying, or maybe misinterpreted it, but I was more ... I was a different student, when I did my HDE. So my mind was more open, I enjoyed it a lot, even my practice teaching was a very nice experience.

I: Just quickly coming back to the subjects that you chose to major in, when you now came into the HDE, to do the HDE.

A: Accounting and Economics.

I: But you did Business Economics as well.

A: No.

I: Oh, you didn't do....?

A: No, no. BCom is doing commercial law and company law, statistics. That time we called it IS information systems. So I never did Business Studies, but I did Accounting.

I: Oh what were you saying? So you majored in Economics?

A: Yes and Accounting.

I: In your BCom, and then you took that further.

A: Yes. Ja.

I: Let me just see here. So I was asking you about the experience of teacher training. How, a lot of people I interviewed were at Technikon. But you are now at the university. So at university you don't do your subjects....?

A: Like the curriculum.

I: Like a school. You do real life stuff. Related to the real world and so could you use that, real world, curriculum in your HDE, in your teaching practice?

A: Not really. The one thing about learning Accounting and Economics is you study and you get to understand what the principals of the subject, I think that especially and more so with Accounting, because I preferred Accounting to Economics. With Accounting especially, I think it opened my mind, I wasn't just thinking I must ... the learners do this, I would always tell them do this and give a reason, do that and it is for that reason. For understanding why they are doing things. When I had started my practice teaching, my mentor told me, listen, I know they teach you a lot of fancy things at university, but don't try that with our kids, because it doesn't work with them. So she didn't want me to be creative, she didn't want me to try new things. She would say teach them this, because this is what they need to know. So I changed from her to another mentor, who was more open. This guy was like ... he would speak to me about life, and about children and how they are. How you need to teach, so for me what I learned while studying BCom. I think it helped me a lot in terms of understanding, what I need to do in Accounting and also the account was more simplistic compared to what I did at university, because a school curriculum doesn't really tell you what you are going to do at university. But what it did, it opened up my mind, where I started to develop my own of teaching and the system that we were using since I started teaching. Every single year, I even had children telling me that they are actually using that themselves when they are facing problems in the work, so I feel vindicated for using that particular methodology that I developed, nobody taught it to me.

I: So what is this?

A: I use a five step approach doing Accounting, so every transaction - I analyse it.

I: Those five questions?

A: Yes. Five steps, what is the amount, what are the two accounts, do they increase or decrease, what type of accounts are they, do you debit or credit these accounts? Now with that you can do the General Ledger, you can do the Accounting Equation, you can do adjustments of a Trial Balance, all those kind of things, just by using those five questions. So I always use that methodology with the kids and I deviated I bit from the introduction of the new curriculum with CAPS, because I just found there are learners who are up to wanting to understand it.

I: Do they just want to do. Tell me how?

A: To receive the answer and then they respond to that. But you ... when you come to why you do this and why do you do that, the lower level learners then can't respond, where in the past, that part would have responded as well. So although I never learned the Accounting curriculum and that is basically when I started teaching, during my HDE I have to go back and try to remember what were the things that I used to learn at school. How did you do the Income Statement, how did you do it, because we do ..

I: It is much more advanced?

A: Yes, and it is when you go to university, so only certain things that you disclose is disclosed. And now you can't even remember how to do this, and what is the format of the Income Statement, what is the format of the Balance Sheet and how do you do your ratio because we calculate ratio in a certain way, but how do you do it now. There are some of that but they also teach it in another way. So the one thing I think is that my degree opened up my mind to the subject and I think that was useful in my teaching of Accounting. When I started I made huge inroads at the school in terms of. .

I: What school was that?

A: I started off at Ravensmead. But when I came to this school, the Accounting results were not good. So when I took over, the Accounting teacher actually asked me to take over from her, because I started with the lower grades. So when

I started taking over, there was the normal teething problems. In the first year, the results were not good, but they were not disastrous. So we started working up to 70, 80, 90% pass rates in Accounting.

I: This is now FET?

A: Grade 10, to 12. But it is particularly grade 12. That was where we had the problem with the results. So a lot of it has to do with my understanding of Accounting and I think the learners appreciate it as a subject that is not just do this, do this. There is a thinking process, there is a logic to it, you can understand it if you want to understand it. So I would instill that in my learners and I was fortunate that we would for Accounting generally, we would get the hardworking learners. You could work easy with them.

I: They chose it, so they must do it.

A: Exactly. We generally had the hard working learners in Accounting. Later on, you got learners who wanted to do Accounting but they are incapable of it. I was sitting with learners who, you can see this kid doesn't understand what you are talking about - and then you just persist and persist and later on we just decided to change the system. We chose for them and then there was this basic improvement in the results.

I: Oh goodness. You spoke about the mentors, there was a lady mentor, but then you thought that lady was not so good and then somebody else mentored you. So, also still right in the beginning, were you mentored in matters regarding opportunities for advancement, if yes, please explain?

A: In terms of advancement in this school?

I: In the education system?

A: No.

I: Nobody, does - nobody does that in education, not one person.

A: I knew that you can become a principal, you can become an HOD, and all those things. But my mind right ... started in the education, my mind was never on it. I actually said I don't want to go into school management - I want to be a teacher. That was my mindset. I knew that there was, but I always said to myself, I don't want to be a manager at the school.

I: And then how did it happen that you became .....?

A: I was just kind of in the right place at the right time.

I: Did you apply for this? Was it a deputy principal's post that you applied for when you came from ...?

A: No, no, I came here as a post level 1. So I started off as a post level 1. And then the one thing I was good on was computers, of all the teachers on this, we had the secretary who could use the computer and I could use the computer. But that was like, you know late 1990s when computers were not really that easily accessible by people. So I was, because I did information systems at UCT, I had a background of computer, Excel, Word Processing. So I kind of got myself into the, I was the IT guy. So whenever there was, we did reports manually, school decided to get the computer system, I didn't go for training, they said here it is, figure it out - and I figured it out. The same with the time table and those kinds of things. So what I did, I did a lot of work that was not my responsibility, and through that I caught the principal's eye, and then he said, he did kind of encourage me.

I: Is it this chap?

A: Ja, he was the principal, he was at the school when I started here. So, he encouraged me a lot, he gave me responsibilities and I grew, as a person professionally. Then I became a Head of Department, it was due to circumstances, my head of department she passed away because of cancer. So while she was on sick leave, I was acting in the position, so when the position became available, I applied for it and then a couple, four, five years after that, the deputy of the school, she got a promotion post at another school and the principal came and ask me to just assist, here and there, but the one thing that counted in my favour, I was good with computers. He knew whatever, administration needed to be done, I could do it. So when they advertised it, I just applied for it. Initially I didn't want to apply. I just said I am happy where I am. I don't want to be the deputy of the school, it is too much responsibilities but now, I am one of you guys, not that I am casting responsibilities on them, but I was just thinking you know, these guys are going to help manage me, and yet I know I am more capable and perhaps more competent than them. So I just decided, no, that I am going to apply and nobody applied when I applied, so that is how I got into the

post. So I was acting in the post for about three years, and then the post was advertised and I was appointed permanent. It was never my intention to end up where I am. Even now I tell people I don't want to be a principal. I don't want to be a principal, but maybe somewhere along the line, I will, and then I get the opportunity to become one.

I: Yes.

A: But I was just in the right place at the right time. But it is not that I kind of also, I think equip myself by being willing to want to do things and I used to do things out of curiosity, can I do it. It is not that I am doing it because I want to be somebody, it was just curiosity. For some ... example, if, there was the report system, I just wanted to see, can I master the system - I would do it and I would master it. Then I would be asked to assist with the time table - then I would assist to see if I could this, and I know, just probably my skills started to develop and then I started to get the respect of the teachers of the school and they encouraged me as well, you know.

I: Okay.

A: So it was never my intention to be where I am today, but I am glad I took that job, it is quite exciting to be in top level management at the school. You know I have to sit and prepare for the next year. When the school opens there is a timetable, everybody is allocated, there are no clashes, those kind of things. You know, so it is a challenge, but you kind of get used to the routine of doing things over and over.

I: So you say it is routine. Some schools are chaotic in the beginning of the year.

A: I think we are lucky in this regard. I spoke to the principal the other day. I am a bit of a workaholic - I think it is the one thing. I have never been on a holiday, except for last year. Last year was the first time in my adult life that I went on holiday. I am serious, it was - my wife said we are going on a holiday. It never used to bother me that if I don't go on holidays. Serious, I just sit at home.

I: You probably didn't go on holiday when you were a child?

A: No. We never did, the last holiday was when I was twelve years old. I went on a holiday with my father, he took me and my two brothers to George, where his



family is from and we spent the month there. That was the last holiday I ever had. It never bothered me.

I: So it wasn't like 'in you' to go on holiday?

A: No, not at all. But you know, so when I had all these responsibilities I would do it during the school holidays. Finish it and it would be so rewarding when I come back, from the holiday and I can show people, here everything is done. But why are you working so hard. I like this.

I: But anyway, it is just who you are. I think you told me a little bit about the grades when you started to teach – the lower grades and then when you went up.

A: Yes.

I: Did you teach anything else besides Accounting, by any chance?

A: I taught EMS.

I: Oh, yes, because it is in the lower grades.

A: And then also business studies, and also economics. I taught a bit of EMS, at my second school that I attended and then I was always into computers, I would give extra-curricular computer classes to the learners.

I: There is a question about sizes of classes - more or less the size of your Accounting classes - maybe what you started with ... and nowadays.

A: I would share to you with you when I come to teaching. To see the size of those classes, we used to have 80 in the class - I am serious, 80 in the class. The kids are sitting with the tables against them and somebody else's table pushing in their back.

I: Is it this school?

A: It was at a school in Cape Town.

I: Oh.

A: It was a school that was abandoned, it was a building and we took that building over. It was in district 6. There is another school, a white neighbouring school. So it was, the learners were from Khayelitsha, so they were bussed in every morning.

I: I was going to ask you what learners?

A: Ja they were bussed in. This school was initially, which is one of those older schools in Khayelitsha. So that school became overcrowded and then it broke up

into two other schools. The only is Zola secondary, the other one is now our school as well. So we were at that building for four years. And then they finish the new building, and we have been here two years, since the end of 1999. It was overcrowded, it was teaching learners who, it wasn't a bad teaching environment but it was a very small school.

I: So it was like cramped.

A: It was cramped. You know I think that experience made us appreciate more, what we have here. At least here the class sizes are manageable, it is still not ideal but compared to what we had, on average we are sitting with about 35 to 40 in a class. Some would go over but some would be less.

I: Is that now, is there one Accounting class and is it English?

A: Yes the medium of the school is English.

I: So there is one Accounting class?

A: In grade 10 we have one, in grade 11 two and in grade 12 we have one. So we became very selective with regards to Accounting. We decided a few years ago that we are going to identify the Maths learners. So our strong learners are going to do Maths, Accounting, Physics, Life Sciences. The only problem we had is that the Maths results, are always a challenge. But that never really impacted on the Accounting because those learners are hard workers - even though they were struggling with the Mathematics.

I: Context within which you teach, you have, I think you have spoken about that. Was it on the recorder or was it just as we were walking around?

A: I can't recall.

I: Oh goodness.

A: Okay, I think I can give you an idea of what it is like. I have been here, travelling by public transport, all the years.

I: Is it by choice, you just do it?

A: Yes, I don't have a car, so I travel by public transport. Yes, I never took any interest in driving.

I: Oh goodness.

A: I tried, but I was never good at it, but I won't say it is my, I started off wanting to drive, but the person that was teaching me, I think he never really wanted to get

interest in teaching me to drive. So I wanted to learn, but this guy wasn't telling me what I was doing wrong. Then I just thought to myself, no man, but everybody seemed to find it so easy, I am finding it so difficult. I thought I was useless and then I just gave up. I have been using public transport to Khayelitsha - all the years that I have been teaching. And I have never ever had an incident where somebody came to me and wanted to rob me. Sometimes if the community members saw some shady fellows, they would come and stand next to me and speak to me.

I: Because they know you are the teacher?

A: They know I am the teacher - they can see. On one or two occasions, someone stood next to me and said, see those guys, but while I am standing here, they won't do anything. So I always felt very safe in this area. Seriously, even in the school, I am respected. You know, these learners are, they respect me, when I speak they listen. You know compared to other schools, because I know what it is like at other schools, but we have the nicest learners.

I: Really?

A: Behaviour wise - you can't ask for better. You know we have our few bad learners, but generally, we don't have problems with our learners. When we speak to them, they listen to us.

I: And they are all obviously from, they must be all from this area?

A: Yes, we draw them from Khayelitsha, a lot of them are coming from the Eastern Cape, some of them have relocated to the Western Cape and then we are taking them in. Then also from Mfuleni, there is transport from Mfuleni to the school. But what I can see, these learners, are the trammies living in Khayelitsha, they were relocated to Mfuleni because they weren't developing the areas initially. So my intention is that they would come back. So are now living in Mfuleni, but they are still coming to our school because they were originally from Khayelitsha and they have registered at our school when they were living in Khayelitsha. So we have, most of our learners are from the area, but the one thing is that we have more girls than boys, they move and they excel at our school and they perform much better than our boys. When we have an award ceremony at the end of the term, when we recognise our top learners - they are mostly girls. It is,

because I only have girls in my life. I have daughters, for me it is quite pleasing to see that these young ladies are driven to be successful. You know, I always hammered it in their head, I say, stand on your own two feet. Decide who you want to marry one day. Decide what your life is going to be like. Don't wait for a man to give you a life, and I have encountered really brilliant learners and girls especially. And I am very pleased about that. Because they come from a society where they are supposed to be subservient.

I: Especially here.

A: Culturally speaking, you know it is expected of them but these girls excel.

I: Good, nice.

A: For me that is one of the pleasing aspects of being here, to see how the young ladies are really pushing to be the best that they can be.

I: You have spoken about now the attitude of the learners, and towards your accounting especially.

A: There is a perception and I think the perception is there with the education officials, that accounting is difficult. Accounting is not difficult. Accounting is a lot of work. But it is not difficult, so the challenge often for me is to get the learners to understand that. Even if you don't understand accounting, you can pass accounting. And you know, when I take learners from grade 10, I can work well with them up to grade 12. But when I take learners from grade 12, it is not necessarily that teachers ... that they are bad teachers ... but it is just we have different approaches and different methodologies of teaching. I am a guy that push them, push them, if you want to be someone in life, you want to be successful you've got to work hard, you got to push.

I: Encourage them.

A: Others are walking, you've got to run. That is my motto, but unfortunately

I: Do you encourage them to work on their own?

A: Yes, homework, they get homework, so what I do, I would explain the work to them and I would do an example with them, but my philosophy always with them, is look, you are here to learn. You've got to understand, you are going to make mistakes and you are going to get things wrong. All I want from you is go home, read the activity, attempt to do the answer. If I wanted 15 things from you, I want

15 answers. Come with that to me, right or wrong and then I can work with you, but don't come to me and say sir I didn't understand. I say you all understand even if you understand wrongly, but you all understand something. If you are going to get the answer wrong, but when I explain it to you, because you have read the information, you will understand what I have done. But if you don't read the information, you will never understand what I am explaining. So I had that kind of approach with them and the one thing I have learned to do is to slow down, our learners we have now, if I compared them to the learners we had a few years ago, I used to have hard working learners, these learners now are not as committed and it is a process to get them to the level where you want them. So I had a class last year that I started with, but I was so driven to want to finish the syllabus because we've got our deadlines. This must be done by such and such a time. Then I would just push on and push on, that at the end of the day I have lost them. I lost them completely. That I ended up only with ten out of 33. Half of them failed, and then afterwards 18 of them could have done accounting. But there marks were below 20% low 20s and I just felt, if they cannot pass grade 11, they cannot pass grade 12. There is that correlation that I picked up with the results. So I just told them you are not going to pass accounting, we had to give them another option. So what I have done this year, is I have actually slowed down. So I started if we are going fast, to see whether they could keep pace with me, if they do not pick up, so I basically had to slow down. And now what is happening is as I slowed down, they are coming on board, because the pace is what they are prepared to work at. But for me it is also, I explained to my head of department, it is a process, because I know what is expected of them, so I am preparing them for grade 11, and for the world, but especially when they get into grade 12.

I: And teaching and learning materials at the school, do you have enough of it?

A: Yes, we are fortunate accounting learners are very responsible learners. So with regard to textbooks, they always bring their textbooks back, it is not that they will lose a textbook. So we don't have a textbook retrieval for accounting is very good. Because I am on their cases with regard to that.

I: Do you have a data projector, laptops or computers?

A: Yes, I have a data projector and a laptop that I can use, but I don't use it because I don't, you know what, I like to talk, I hardly ever write on the board, and the reason why I do this, is because of the course I did, the ACE course. We write, especially with our learners, their English is very poor. When I write on the board, they don't even know what I am writing. So what I do, I speak with them a lot, so I don't dictate to them, because I said to them, you need to listen, you need to look so that you can understand this is the right answer, that is the wrong answer. I want to develop that skill in them, you need to listen. So I do want them to take notes for them, when there is formats and things like that, and say here is the format. This is what it looks like, you need to learn it as is. Everything else will come automatically. Solutions if necessary, I write the solution on the board, but most of the time I will read it to them. And I tell them, now if you are lost, you tell me, where you are lost. So they will stop me and say sir, I am lost. Just repeat that. Because I want them not to speak, I want them to be engaged, sometimes when you write things on the board, they are chatting and they are looking and they are not focusing on what they are doing. So I tend not to do a lot of writing, I use visual aids, but it doesn't impact on the results because the learners are normally capable, except there are learners they are doing the subject but they just cannot cope with the subject at all. So the smart classes, we are supposed to be using the data projectors and those kind of things, but we basically, wherever you are going, you cannot take it and you have to carry it with you. It is a bit of challenge, the teachers who are using it a lot, they are the ones who have their own classes. The Science teachers they have their own laboratory. When they go into class, they can set up for the whole day and stay there. The others teachers have to leave their things in the class, now, it is a risk because the learners can damage and you are responsible for it. Now you are going to go out and you got to shut down, and you got to start up again. It is a lot of a challenge but we had the facilities available. If we need to use it.

I: Okay, that. I think that will now. Let me just see I have perhaps miss out anything about the context. But other teachers, other accounting teachers, are there other accounting teachers. Or are you the only teacher?

A: Only one other accounting teacher but she prefers not to teach accounting.

I: Is it that lady.

A: No, no it is another colleague of mine, also a young teacher. Very effective teacher, teaches economics, she gets very good results but she prefer not to teach accounting. She is competent at it, but she always tell me, I am teaching accounting but I prefer to teach economics.

I: It doesn't excite her.

A: It doesn't excite her.

I: So for grade 10, 11 and 12, you are the only accounting person?

A: No, there are two of us. We have teacher teaching EMS but she is also not comfortable with accounting. She will teach it, she just goes through motions but you know that clearly understanding of it, I have to explain to her. You need to do that thing for that and that is how you do that. She has gone for training and those kind of things, but the passion for accounting, she always tells me, I'm getting there. So she is teaching the learners, but you know in the lower grades, even when we were at school, it is very basic. So a learner can get full marks without even understanding what it is, just by association. I see that I do this, I see that I do that. And there is very, I am looking at the accounting equation, it is only receipts and payments and later on there's debtors and creditors. Ja so it is kind of narrow. And then when I get to grade 10, so the teacher can manage teaching learners what they need to know but I don't know whether they do not have that passion for the subject and logic and understanding how this subject works. Whether that is coming across.

I: You said two, so did you include this lady?

A: No she does EMS, and then for accounting in the FET there is two of us. The lady teaches grade 10, and I teach grade 11 and 12.

I: Also just, still about the learners and how they perhaps interact with each other. I am just thinking, are there. ..

A: no.

I: So there is no culture difference?

A: No it is human nature. You know I like you and I don't like you. But with each other they are, the learners that I teach, they are a different type of learners. I think they have a different value system. If I compare them to other learners that

do history or geography. These learners who do accounting, we consider them being the elite of the school. The top learners of the school. So we have certain expectations of them. So the value system that they have is different. They are on task. They want to succeed. They have a vision of moving onto be. The other learners, if I go into a class, I often go to them to speak, try to motivate the learners, we speak to these learners and they have no clue, about where they want to go in life.

I: That is why they just took any subject.

A: Ja, we give them that subject because we think they can manage with it. We don't think they can manage with accounting or physics or with mathematics. So we give them geography consumer studies, and CAT, but when you go in there, and speak to these learners, it is, most time you find that they don't even know why they are here. They know they come to school, but they don't really know what it is, they don't know what they want to do in life. They don't even know where they are going. Are they going to pursue, but the others will tell you they want to be an engineer. Or they want to be a pilot. But they don't even have mathematics, they don't want to have physics, the one was telling me that he wants to be a doctor - he is doing history and he is doing geography. And I said, boy if you want to be a doctor, why are you not working hard enough? So you can get into those subjects that will take you to university. So we have that challenge, as much as our learners are very nice, you know they are very nice learners, everybody who comes to the school, always says oh you've got very nice children, they are behaved, it is such a pleasure being around. But they are very lazy.

I: Okay, so let's see what else is here. And so when you started to teach. Was this still the old curriculum, it must have been the old curriculum.

A: Yes.

I: it wasn't NCS, it wasn't NCS.

A: it was the old curriculum, the one we still used at school.

I: So how do you, when you look at differences between the old and all the changes, how did you cope with all those changes?



A: One thing that I pick up is the quality of textbooks that they have now, they don't measure up to the ones that we had that time. The textbook was thick.

I: Was it logical accounting?

A: Logical approach, those were thick books. They had a variety of examples, now you tend to find most textbooks, just one or two examples and sometimes, I just find them not too challenging but then you do get other books that you know would be, you are going to get service providers who come to the school and say there is this book, and you don't necessarily have access to a New Era textbook because nobody has told you that it is there. This textbook seems to cover everything, now you order the textbook, may be go to the district, and then all of a sudden you see that there is this textbook and nobody ever brought it to your attention that this textbook is there.

I: What about the subject advisor?

A: You see, they can't tell you what text book and they can't recommend a textbook. They are not allowed to do that. It is an ethical issue. Because they might recommend a book of a friend and get kickbacks, it is an ethical issue that they cannot recommend textbooks. But you know, when you sit and now you speak to colleagues and they say I saw this book and it is very good and that book. But now you can't order the books, because you are limited by the ordering system of the department as well. They basically have an ordering system, they had the variety of what books you ordered already. So they say, you've got that book already. And you say, okay, I want to order 20 books, they say, no but you've got so many learners, you already had so many books, you can't order more. It is quite sophisticated. What you have to do, is you need to order outside. Now if you've got a few learners, it is fine, you can change your textbook very easily, but if you've got quite a huge number, it becomes more difficult. Say if you want to change all the textbooks, say for example a language, then you got to change the grammar book, then you've got to change the literature book and this is costly. So you what we tend to do, now is, we look at the print resources, past question papers and all that and we draw on that, and use that. I seldom refer directly to notes in the textbook, I would rely on the number of resources that I have and information that I have access to and take that and see

how I can compile, with an idea of what kind of questions that the learners are asking.

I: Okay.

A: But the content, for me the content generally stays the same, there are slight changes in terms of topics that are brought in, but they don't deviate from the standard things that we do in accounting. So for example, the activities in accounting which wasn't there before, it was in, it was taken out, brought back again. We had reconciliation of, and reconciliation that we did in grade 12 and now we do interpretation. So you do it in grade 11, but in grade 12 it is just interpretation of bank recon. In the old curriculum of higher grade and standard grade, they used to ask grade 11 work as well and to a large degree there was quite a lot of grade 11 work but in the standard grade paper. Now there is still some reference to grade 11, but the emphasis is more on what they do in grade 12.

I: So you don't have to learn 11 and 12.

A: You will get, look it kind of follows on especially when you are looking at debtors and creditors and financial statements and the adjustments, those kind of things.

I: It is just more in depth.

A: Ja. But it is just a different way, so you've got partnerships in grade 11, in grade 12 you are focusing on companies, sole proprietor. So the core what we do in accounting, is still the same but there is slight changes, which is not that difficult, it is easy, through the training that we receive we can manage.

I: And on that training, do you think that training was adequate?

A: The training is never adequate. I think that is one of the, I found that the education department acknowledges it as well. Sometimes it is difficult, because we attend the curriculum changes, we attend the one course where you are basically there for a week, five days and you are now receiving a like a crash course, sometimes you come out of there, you are unsure about what is it that you were supposed to learn, but fortunately our curriculum advisors they are on standby, if you need assistance they are helping and they will help you. I for example the section on manufacturing - I never did this at school ... I never did it

at university. The first year I did it, I was struggling a bit, it took me about two years to come to terms with what it is that they ask.

I: Direct cost.

A: I couldn't understand the logic of how is the information, because now when you get the textbook, the textbook has everything there, I try to think, what came in first and what came in next and what went out. It took me a while to understand what the process was and how the information must flow into the different accounts. Once you get to understand it, you realise it is so easy. But I can't remember being in the training that we had, we thought about manufacturing.

I: Why is thing there?

A: Ja, we had later on, I think we had some courses, one day workshops, we were trained in say ethics, training ethics. We had something on the cash flow statement or the cash budget, so what you got after the short training, it was helpful because now you contextualize things. Because now you've gone through, I taught this, I kind of taught the learners what they need to know. I am not comfortable with it, but I know if the learners as a question, I can explain to them, this and this. So now when you go for training, now you can understand, you can understand what you are doing, and what was done in the class. Before training you are clueless, you don't know what is going on. Because you are so busy with the old curriculum and now you get your training in the new one.

I: Oh.

A: And you haven't even had a chance to go through the documentation and really digest and maybe work through part by part, and see how things are done. So in that regard it is a bit lacking, but I would say if you have a sound knowledge of accounting, adaptation. I just struggled with manufacturing. I just struggled slightly because I didn't do it at school.

I: I also did it.

A: So you know it is those kind of things, but you know once you get to understand it, the process, then you understand how it works now. The Accounting principles.

I: What, because this is not like a set question. I must now look where I can fit in what bot curriculum, both content and how to teach. You didn't mention this, specifically, I actually just want to know. Did you receive training in both the curriculum aspects, for example, how to teach and new topics?

A: Yes, we could taught on new topics, and we were told what the new topics are. I remember when CAPS was introduced, the documentation was vague. Because what happen and I mentioned it to the facilitator, the teacher with experience and will go and they know what needs to be taught. But if you are inexperienced, you are so lost you don't know what it is, to what extent. You might not be sure to what extent, so what they did, they were very specific by teaching, if you've got to teach this, you've got to teach it. Those kind of guidelines were never there before. And also we did not know for example where depreciation, those methods, you've got to teach those methods. If you didn't know those methods, the department will only concentrate on one, so I think they initially it was a bit scamping but then subsequently they gave more flesh to the document. We could then go through the document and you know exactly what it is and that you need to do.

I: So all in all do you think that the training affected, how do you think the training affected your practice, did it help?

A: just in the sense of the kind of not knew what it is that you have to do. Say for example in term one, you've got to teach this. So there is an annual teaching plan, especially now with CAPS, so you knew for term 1, this is the work you've got to cover. That is the work, for term 2, so on and so on. Term 1 you've got to do this task and this control test.

I: Do you like that teaching plan?

A: Because it keep you focused, it keeps you, you makes you accountable. Because I know what needs to be done. Before ... I remember the block project ... and you could do the project any time you want to. It can be the end of the year, middle of the year. Now you've got tasks for every term. And they are very specific, what needs to be done, you cannot do the project in any term. It's got to be a written report. You know, the project has to be in term 2, study your presentations, term 3. So I think those kind of guidelines are good and also in

terms of how the work is set out. You've got to do this, so when you do end of year adjustments, bad debts, depreciation. Bad debts adjustments.

I: So many weeks, so many days.

A: Within a certain period of time, that is what you have to do. So you did work to ensure that you cover that in that first week, in the three weeks. So that kind of guidance, I think is quite helpful.

I: This question is about the principal and his attitude towards sending people for training.

A: No, he is keen on sending us for training. So teachers are informed about the training, if the teacher needs a petrol voucher, because, as much as you claim, sometimes there is a delay in terms of the claiming. So petrol vouchers will be made out so that you can go for training.

I: The school pays for?

A: Ja. Out of the school funds. So they basically have an account at the petrol, so you get a voucher, you go and put your petrol, account to the school.

I: I just want to come back, to that other question about EMS aspect. The teacher in EMS you said, she doesn't really have, she is not so passionate about.

A: Her understanding of the subject is not good because she still comes and ask how, what is this answer, what is that answer, how do I do this, how do I do that and she is an EMS teacher for many years. And she has gone.

I: She is a qualified commerce teacher.

A: Yes, a qualified commerce teacher. And she has gone for Accounting training. So the department identifies, that lifts this teacher who is teaching EMS, but they are not so very strong in Accounting. And they need some training. So they go for training. But sometimes you know, some people learn differently from others. Some people can understand, I think in her case, even if she goes to training, she doesn't really come back with anything, she can say okay now this teacher understands Accounting.

Every year I have to explain to her and help her.

I: And she is the only one, in the EMS? I mean teaching EMS. And then what do you find, how is the overflow, going over or what?

A: We look at the marks, how they performed, in grade, we don't necessarily look at EMS. We look at Mathematics. Because my, when I teach, when it comes to Accounting I just see they know nothing. Seriously, and I say, okay, I've got to teach them from scratch. So I teach them all the basic principles.

I: So does that not frustrate you, may be trying to cover a lot of the Accounting?

A: It doesn't. It doesn't at all. I just see it as part of the dynamics of the school. There is no point in fretting over it. We can't for example say no, we don't want to teach her, there is whole consequences, from labour point of view. I am not saying the teacher is incompetent, she started with that aspect, that she can teach the children, what they need to know to pass. But you know that passion for the subject, the understanding of the subject, it might not come through. So I just, we don't look at the Aher way, EMS marks, when it comes to say Accounting. We just say Mathematics, are you good in Mathematics, you are hardworking, you can cope with Accounting.

I: Okay. I am almost done. Personal philosophy on the new CAPS for Accounting. Was that answered already? Most important challenges regarding the curriculum. How do you deal with these CAPS challenges, did that not come up already?

A: Ja, I spoke about the textbooks no 1.

I: And you spoke about the manufacturing account and things like that.

A: But, generally Accounting is Accounting. We might have certain, I think the biggest challenge are the learners, for me, the biggest challenge are the learners and their attitudes and the value systems that they have. We were finding, when we go to analysis of results, going to our, the complaints are the same from teachers. They are worried about the type of learners that they have. The type of learner we had back in the day, the values that we expect them to have as Accounting learners, that can go somewhere with the subject, it is the subject that is practical, it can take you somewhere in life. That, there is no appreciation for that. They say to themselves, with this subject I can go far, within our community, where there is, at the moment we are in the Accounting profession, there is an outcry, that we are not sufficient, black accountants coming through, there are not sufficient black accountants. There is an opportunity for them, to advance and go far in life with Accounting as a career, but that means, I speak to them a lot about

that, I say always tell them, you want to be a millionaire in the year, become a CA. Like the subject, like mathematics, you become a millionaire. You can have a nice happy life. But that

I: Is money equal happiness? Do you want to study that?

A: But it is motivation, you know, because they come from poor communities, you want them to also know that. They can enrich themselves you know, they need to know that when want to advance in life, there are material things that you can require, it might not make us happy, but it may make our lives convenient. So I am always speak to them about that opportunities that are there, but you know for me, I believe that learners are capable of learning the subjects. If they put their minds to it. You know, if you sit down and you decide I am going to learn this ledge account, learning that ledger account, learning the next ledger account, it what is going to get you to pass. Learning the format of the income statement, you might not know adjustments, but knowing where to add and subtract, what goes where, it is going to get you to pass, get 30% and 40%. But a lot of them, just don't want to put in that hard work. They have to sit and memorise. And learn things they just don't want to do that.

I: Do you obviously discourage that?

A: Look I tell them, there are certain things that I always tell them you can learn. I always tell them, look Accounting is something that you pursue as a career. You can start off not understanding it, but you can understand what to do. Because when it comes to exams, there is something that we want you to do, and that is the what? The why doesn't come into the equation at all. But when I teach, I teach the why. I say, okay, this is what you do, this is what you need to do. You need to be able to do this account, now this is why this is there, and this is why that is there. The one that is interested in Accounting, and want to pursue it for his career, is going to want to know why? The one that is just doing Accounting and needs to pass it, just wants to know what is it that I am supposed to do. And they respond that, that is the one thing, they respond to that what. We tell me, learn that, it is going to come in the exam. They are going to learn it whether they understand it or not, it doesn't matter, they are going to learn it. But now when it comes to more challenging things, where they can see,

I: Ratio's, what about ratio's?

A: Ja, the formulations, the interpretation is fine, they can interpret the ratio's, but the problem is the calculations. They don't want to remember the formula. I tell them learn, memorise the formula.

I: Substitute.

A: Substitute your amounts in and you will be fine. Then it is about has it improved or worsen, very basic. Has it improved or worsened? You must be able to look at interpretation. Then from there comes recommendations. You know, so if the learners are competent, I can, they can latch on to explanations, and you can see they understand, and a lot of it has to do with their logical processors, that mathematical way of thinking, so that comes through. And then if for example they are doing subjects like economics and business studies, a lot of that aspects comes into Accounting as well. So there is interpretation questions, they've got to give their opinion about something. They can then refer to things like business studies, they can refer to things like economics. But I always say that understanding Accounting is a mindset. You know if you, don't have the right kind of mindset, if you are not hardworking, you are not a responsible learner, then you will never be successful in Accounting and unfortunately I have had for quite a few years, learners that did the subject but they just no good at it, they just don't want to learn. I've seen transformation, I remember with one learner in fact vividly, she was the lowest performing learner in grade 10. She came to the school during March with a backlog of Accounting, but she was a very good maths learner and I said no this learner is good in maths, she can do well in Accounting and I asked her where do you see yourself going with Accounting?, because you failed it last year, do you want to pass it? She said yes. And I said now you just do what I tell you to do, that girl religiously did and was hardworking, she went from a failure, to over 40%. To one of the most responsible learners, I think she got an average of in the 40% that was from grade 11 to grade 12. So I always tell them, it doesn't matter what you have done in Accounting, but get your mind right, if your mindset is right, then you can be successful in the subject, then you can get at the minimum 40% and the minimum 40%.



I: So the learners that you teach in grade 12, obviously. I know you said earlier on, the pass rate is around 70, 80.

A: Yes.

I: Is, I don't know, can you off hand give some kind of a breakdown, so many 50%, so many 60%.

A: The one thing is always, I always tell the learners, your symbol that you are going to get, is going to be determined by what you do at home. So over the years, we've had learners sitting in the 40s, in the 50s in the 60s, never cracked 70, never cracked 80 and then last year, I had two learners that were just go-getters. I told them, you want to get 80%, you work at home. You don't just work at school, you have to go and study at home and work. They excelled basically in all their subjects. The one got 80%, over 80% for Accounting, the other one got 76%. But I could see that those learners were going to do well and then also the others, there were 60%, there was a 50%, but there was a nice spread, as before it would be in the 30s, it would be in the 40s and may be the odd learner, sitting over 50 or sitting over 60. So I always tell the learners, yes, you come here to learn, I come here to teach you. But if you really want to be successful you are going to work. These learners are the so-called model C schools. They do well because of the effort they put in their work, so they are sitting with different resources, with different text books, different question papers, they are studying every single day till whatever time. And we can see they are sitting with their books, and then the results come through, I always tell them if you want to get 80%, it is possible, but you have to work, I cannot not take hand or tell you here is my hand, and I pat you on the back, do your work. You must be disciplined. I want you to achieve a certain mark, and you have to work to get it. And with those learners, last year, I did nothing special as a teacher besides teaching, I taught them, I give them relevant content, I gave them resource material and they worked. And that is what brought them success.

I: I am assuming that you will still be there this is the right profession for you.

A: Yes, I told them there is not a day that I come to school and say I don't want to be here. Serious, I get up every day and want to teach.

I: what is it that actually motivates you? What is the driving force behind you want to teach and knowing that this is, I am assuming you know that this is what you are supposed to be doing now. So what is that drive?

A: It is just enjoyment, no 1, I enjoy my subject, I love Accounting. I love this subject, seriously. The second is, the environment where I am teaching. The environment plays such a huge role in your sense of satisfaction. So when I come to school, I know the learners that I am going to teach, they are not going to give me grief. They might not perform well academically, but they are not going to be rude. They are going to be respectful towards me and that for me counts more than anything else. I can have problems with my colleague which is normal, you had disagreements with them, but we can resolve it. But when children become a problem, it can be very nasty. You know, so for me I don't have the frustration, where I go into a class and the learners will sit there, earphones, or their phone, you are teaching and they are looking that way. They are attentive and they listen to me and for me that is important. The challenge is there with regard to the results, but I always tell the learners, I can teach you, I can't learn for you. I can explain to you, but I can't understand for you. You've got to put in that effort and when they put in the effort, the results come. I can see learners transform. I have seen a kid that was, it was a potential dropout, he was a smoker on the school, and I spoke to him one day, and I said, young guy what you are going to do now. You fail, you fail and why do you do that, because you are getting old on the school. He said he is not going to change. I said try change but I want to see your changing, that kid changed like that.

I: Just like that.

A: In a space of one year. He went from a failure to top three learner, aggregates, over 70%. That kid ended up going to university. And it was just a mindset change, he changed his friends. The friends that he had, he started to sit with hardworking. And this was a kid, he was sitting in the toilet, try to hide on the, the walls that are separating the different cubicles, he was sitting on top of it. Try to hide away from me.

I: Oh my goodness.

A: It was just a mindset, I always tell the learners, I mean, I have seen other subjects as well, other learners, learning and success in school is a mindset. And it is a mindset of that learner. If you want to be successful, you can be successful. I remember teacher him coming to school, he was naughty, I called him and I just saw this big drop falling out of his eyes. Chubby kid, and this is big drops splashing, you know something splashes, the teardrop splash on the floor. And then I started, I taught him Accounting but he was hopeless in Accounting, and the group that he was with, was hopeless, then I told them, you can't cope with Accounting, you have to change to something else. He still failed and then he came to grade 12. And that kid decided to work hard, he went, he managed to achieve a pass that allowed him to go to Technikon. This was a kid that said he was just going to get a normal matric certificate. He came so close to actually getting into university. And that was just a change of mindset, in the space of one year. Where he just said, school work is important, this is my priority and the results came. And I think he probably looked at that year and said why wasn't I doing this earlier. If I had done this earlier, I could have been done with school a long time ago. So these kids have it within them to be successful but they got to believe and if they do believe, that they are capable of better things, then their attitude changes towards their school work and then the results are much better. But it is just sometimes, I think they, the kind of environment we are in is to get lost. You know, people always point out, you know this one comes from Hanover Park, look what they have achieved. This one comes from there, look what they have achieved. That is one, how many thousand, so the general thing is you fall within your environment. There are those who decide I want to be different, although they tend to be the exceptions and few and far between and that is the unfortunate kids.

I: So I guess if I give you a job now and say I will pay you R3000 more, will you take that job, or still stay here?

A: I will probably stay here.

I: So it is not about the money.

A: People, don't understand, how nice it is to be at the school. I always tell, I've been asked already don't you want to leave the school. Don't you want to go

somewhere else? That is why I don't want to apply for a principal post. I said I really enjoy myself here. I've been at other schools, I've seen what it can be like. And really I have run-ins with a few kids, but the nice thing about it, is that despite those run-ins, I can talk to a kid and still connect with him and say look, you understand why I am doing this to you. And that kid might decide he is going to drop out at school, but when he walks outside and he sees me, he will greet me, there won't be any animosity. Now to me that is something, that is very special, that experience at the school. It is a very, very nice place. I am working non-stop. From the time I come in, till the time I go home, which is normally pass four. I am working non-stop. And it doesn't feel like a burden. Sometimes it feels I just, I enjoy working here. But I enjoy being at the school. I think the one thing that has, that might, that has possibly changed, the fact that I got married, I got married in 2013.

I: Oh, we got married in 2011.

A: So that changed my life, because I've got a young daughter now, she is three years old this year. And I need that stability also. People always ask me so why didn't you apply, because I have lived my life backwards, I should have started, maybe if I started earlier I would have been more settled in life, and my children would have been grown up already. If I look at my siblings, I would have been in a different stage of my life. But I am basically starting in my life now, a different chapter of my life, which is very important. To a degree I pushed schoolwork aside, in terms of what I do at home, but when I am at school, I work, I don't sit around and do nothing. So every day, in my class I teach and I am teaching because I want to teach the subject. I want to help them to understand it, if they want to. You know, so I enjoy coming to school to teach, I don't, I am actually glad that I changed my profession. And my career choice. I don't know how life would have been, I was offered a position at another school, in Atlantis. I was offered permanent there, but I knew that the post at this school, and I think that I was even a good chance of getting it because of my results I had achieved. So I had an opportunity to leave the school, you know but I decided no. I want to stay here.

I: Who, I forgot to ask you in the beginning, the quintile rating of the school?

A: Is it, quintile 3, I know it, I think I've got it somewhere here on my phone. You know the quintiles changes, the one year it is this quintile, the next year they change it. So let me just quickly check here. Quintile 3? But I think we might have changed to quintile 2 or even 1.

I: So currently you are 3, or perhaps 2.or even 1. Okay I am going to wrap up the interview.

A: That is fine, I like talking about school.

I: So, thank you very much for granting me the opportunity to interview you as part of my study on the lived experiences of Accounting teachers.

# A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SELECTED ACCOUNTING TEACHERS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE.

## APPENDIX G: FIELD NOTES

**Research participant: Bryan**

*Upon meeting Bryan at entrance of school – he was enthusiastic – showed me around school – popped in at various classrooms – noticed lack of resources – visited storeroom for groceries – daily meals for learners cooked by volunteers from community – walked through multi-purpose hall – learners were rehearsing for a play.*

### **Theme 1: Autobiographical information**

#### ***1.1 Teacher demographic characteristics***

1.1.1 Gender: *Male*

1.1.2 Race: *Coloured*

1.1.3 Age: *47*

1.1.4 Marital status: *Married*

1.1.5 Qualifications: *BComm; HDE; ACE: Language across the Curriculum*

1.1.6 Years of experience: *20*

#### ***1.2 Personal background***

1.2.1 Tell me about where you grew up – the place, the people/community, period, culture?

1.2.2 What were your parents' professions?

*Spoke with admiration about his father*

1.2.3 What were your parents' dream(s) for you? What profession did they want you to follow?

1.2.4 Tell me about your own (early) dreams - for your own career/life?

1.2.5 What do you remember most about what your parents taught you about work, work ethic, commitment, matching your personality with your work, etc.

1.2.6 Did you do Accounting at school? How did you experience the subject? In which way did your teacher influence your own practice?

*He was excited when he spoke about Accounting at school.*

1.2.7 Was teaching your first choice of occupation? If not, have you worked in a different profession before entering the teaching profession? Tell me about that – when, what did you do and for how long? Why did you leave?

1.2.8 What motivated you to study teaching?

### **1.3 Teacher qualification(s)**

1.3.1 When did you enrol for your teaching qualification?

1.3.2 When did you complete your teaching qualification?

1.3.3 Where did you train as a teacher? Why did you decide to study at this institution?

1.3.4 What were your major subjects? Why did you choose to major in these subjects?

- 1.3.5 How did you experience your teacher training? For example, how did the curriculum that you followed at university/technikon relate to the practical nature of the subject in the ‘real world’? And: In relation to what was covered in the school curriculum how did the curriculum that was covered at university/technikon compare to that which you done at school.

## **Theme 2: Teacher’s professional context (lived space)**

- 2.1 When you first started to teach, did the school appoint a mentor to guide you? Explain this experience – advantages, disadvantages, how did it help you or not? Explain your experience regarding teacher networks, communications with administrators, etc.

*Spoke about current position at school with passion.*

- 2.2 Were you mentored in matters regarding opportunities for advancement? If yes, explain the experience.
- 2.3 Did you study further since you first qualified?
- 2.4 If yes, what is your qualification now? If still busy: What qualification have you enrolled for?
- 2.5 If person studied further/is studying further: How did you/do you find studying part-time with all the work involved in being a teacher? Explain your experience regarding support from your colleagues and/or principal whilst furthering your studies.
- 2.6 What subject(s) did you teach when you started teaching? Which grades were they and for how long did you teach those grades? What were the class sizes of these grades you taught? How did you experience teaching these (other) subjects?



- 2.7 If participant did not start out teaching Accounting: Explain how you landed up teaching Accounting? Which grades have you taught? How did you experience teaching those grades? Which grades are you currently teaching? How do you experience teaching these grades?

[If participant started out teaching Accounting immediately – adjust the above questions accordingly.]

- 2.8 Describe the circumstances/context within which you teach? For example: number of learners enrolled at your school, infra-structure of your school, demographics of learners.
- 2.9 What is the average class size of your current Accounting class(es)? How do you experience the attitude of your Accounting learners towards learning and/or towards the subject? How does this affect your teaching?

*Stern outlook when talked about what he expects of his learners w.r.t. exercises that learners have to do in class and do for .homework*

- 2.10 Are there sufficient teaching and learning materials at the school? What is the principal (or management)'s approach to sourcing adequate resources/teaching and learning materials. Explain how you experience support with regards to this matter?

### **Theme 3: The teacher and the Accounting curriculum**

- 3.1 When you entered the teaching profession in .....(year).... what was the legislated curriculum at that time? How did you experience teaching that curriculum ?
- 3.2 How did the various changes in the educational landscape over the past decade (or two) impact on your disposition towards the Accounting curriculum?

*Tone - annoyed*

- 3.3 With the introduction of the new curriculum (CAPS) did you receive any training in Accounting from the Department of Education? How did you experience this training? Did this training take place before, during or after the introduction of the new curriculum? [If training took place during or after the implementation of CAPS, how did you feel when you suddenly had to teach this new curriculum without undergoing any training?]

*Tone – frustrated or disheartened at inadequate training*

- 3.4 Did you receive training in both the curriculum aspects (e.g. the *how* to teach) and in the new content/topics. How did the training affect your practice?
- 3.5 How did you experience your principal's attitude towards sending you for training?
- 3.6 How do you experience teaching Accounting according to the new curriculum (CAPS) after undergoing training?
- 3.7 What is your personal philosophy (sentiments/thoughts) on the new curriculum (CAPS) for Accounting? What do you think are the most challenging changes regarding the new curriculum for Accounting? How do you deal/cope with these challenges?

*Tone – irritated - WCED – not very supportive w.r.t. supplying enough textbooks*

- 3.8 Do you feel that this is (still) the right profession for you? Explain.

*Answered with confidence – conviction - passion*